

To: Smith, Bonnie[smith.bonnie@epa.gov]
From: Seneca, Roy
Sent: Tue 2/18/2014 12:44:49 PM
Subject: FW: EPA Region 3 Headlines

From: Vocus Subscriber [mailto:pradmin@vocus.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 6:02 AM
To: Seneca, Roy
Subject: EPA Region 3 Headlines

EPA Region 3 Headlines

Headline		Links
Fact-Checking the Bill Nye-Marsha Blackburn Climate Change 'Debate'	DC (19) 02/17/2014	<i>Wire, The</i> Te Vie xt w Clip
...the two other big reasons emissions fell during recent years were the slower economy (resulting in less electricity use) and the natural gas boom from fracking (meaning less coal-burning). To keep emissions down, we would need to keep moving from coal to natural gas as an electricity source, which...		
Lawsuit cites N.Y. delays with "fracking" study	02/17/2014	<i>NAREIT SmartBrief</i> Te Vie xt w Clip
...and Gov. Andrew Cuomo, saying delays in a study of hydraulic fracturing of natural gas wells are costing their clients financial gains. New York halted "fracking" in 2008 for an environmental study, and in January, state environmental commissioner Joe Martens said there will be no regulations before...		
NY state eyes study's high-speed rail proposals	02/17/2014	<i>Washington Examiner - Online</i> Te Vie xt w Clip
...project. State officials say high-speed trains can boost tourism and economic development in the upstate region, as well as reduce highway traffic and pollution. Improving Amtrak's on-time record and increasing the frequency of trains running between Manhattan and Buffalo would move New York state...		

Fact-Checking the Bill Nye-Marsha Blackburn Climate Change 'Debate'	02/17/2014	<i>Wire, The</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...the two other big reasons emissions fell during recent years were the slower economy (resulting in less electricity use) and the natural gas boom from fracking (meaning less coal-burning). To keep emissions down, we would need to keep moving from coal to natural gas as an electricity source, which...			
Janet Yellen?s problem	02/17/2014	<i>Human Events</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...the OECD developed countries. The EPA is going to destroy the coal industry. The Obama administration refuses to open up federal lands for oil-and-gas fracking and drilling, even though the energy revolution is a high-paying job creator. And the National Labor Relations Board is pushing for snap...			
John Kerry Calls Climate Change 'World's Most Fearsome' Weapon Of Mass Destruction	02/17/2014	<i>Think Progress</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...I pointed out last year. The United States has already undermined its standing to cajole other countries into climate commitments by expanding oil and gas drilling as well as coal exports. But none of those were Kerry's decision, whereas Keystone is. Kerry said in Jakarta that for the problem...			
John Kerry Calls Climate Change 'World's Most Fearsome' Weapon Of Mass Destruction	02/17/2014	<i>Think Progress</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
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Fracking Well Blowout Causes Oil And Chemical Wastewater Spill In North Dakota	02/17/2014	<i>Think Progress</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...reports in Reuters . The well lost control after a blowout preventer failed, and began leaking between 50 and 70 barrels (2,100 to 2,940 gallons) per day of fracking fluid — a mixture of generally classified chemicals, water, and sand — and 200 barrels (8,400 gallons) per day of oil, the Reuters reports...			
Landowner group files lawsuit against N.Y. governor over fracking	02/17/2014	<i>NAREIT SmartBrief</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...hydraulic fracturing, which has been blocked in			

the state since 2008. The group wants Cuomo's administration to speed up the completion of two reviews on fracking, which are being conducted by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health. Published in Brief

**Bill Nye Criticizes
Republican Rep. for Denying
Climate Change** 02/17/2014 *Christian Post - Online, The* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...Stoyan Zaimov, Christian Post Reporter Bill Nye "The Science Guy" has criticized Tennessee Republican Rep. Marsha Blackburn for disputing the reality of climate change, insisting that the scientific community accepts it as fact. He also called for legislation to tackle climate change. "There...

**Leak reported at N.D. oil well
after blowout preventer fails** 02/17/2014 *NAREIT SmartBrief* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...North Dakota, resulting in a leak of hydraulic fracturing chemicals. The company said the well's blowout preventer failed, and 50 to 70 barrels per day of fracking fluid are leaking from the well. Responders are "still diverting what's flowing from the well into storage tanks," said North Dakota Department...

**Landowner group files
lawsuit against N.Y. governor
to push fracking** 02/17/2014 *NAREIT SmartBrief* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...hydraulic fracturing, which has been blocked in the state since 2008. The group wants Cuomo's administration to speed up the completion of two reviews on fracking, which are being conducted by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health. "Since taking office in January...

**1 month after spill, W.
Virginians wary of water** 02/17/2014 *WTTG-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) - More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

**NC Gov. McCrory briefed on
Duke coal ash lawsuit** 02/17/2014 *WTTG-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...about filing a lawsuit against Duke Energy that resulted in a proposed settlement fining the \$50 billion corporation \$99,000 to resolve violations for pollution leaching from two huge coal ash dumps. State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers...

**Obama to meet with
Canadian PM Harper as** 02/17/2014 *RawStory.com* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)

pressure mounts around
Keystone XL

Cli
p

...more fundamental changes are shaping the
bilateral energy relationship. The United States
is tapping energy in the ground and offshore
thanks to new fracking and drilling technologies,
and this is fueling significant production that
could put it in competition with Canada for
overseas customers....

Fracking Well Blowout
Causes Oil And Chemical
Wastewater Spill In North
Dakota

02/17/2014

Think Progress

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[Clip](#)

"Fracking Well Blowout Causes Oil And Chemical
Wastewater Spill In North Dakota" An oil well
owned by Whiting Petroleum Corp. started leaking
hydraulic...

xkcd's "Frequency" Will
Make You Feel How Fast the
Earth Is Moving

02/17/2014

Smithsonian - Online

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[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...to feel. Every three beats of your heart,
roughly, an earthquake is happening somewhere on
the planet. (Which makes those tiny earthquakes
induced by fracking or Seattle Seahawks fans seem
slightly less impressive.) But there's one entry on
Monroe's chart that never seems to blip:

"Earthquake...

Twin Disasters Helped Hone
Energy Expert

02/17/2014

National Journal - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...natural gas, chemicals, pipelines, shipping, and
trading—and more recently on what the company
calls unconventional oil and gas development, better
known as fracking. His move to Bluewater
Strategies was prompted by the opportunity to work
with an old friend and colleague, McKie Campbell,
who joined...

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on
Duke coal ash lawsuit

02/17/2014

Washington Examiner - Online

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[Clip](#)

...intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy,
resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the
\$50 billion corporation \$99,111 to resolve
violations over groundwater contamination leaching
from two huge coal ash dumps. Environmentalists
criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that
included...

DE (2)

Jim Hillibish: A Midge was
the sweetest car on Earth -
when it ran

02/17/2014

Sussex Countian - Online

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[Clip](#)

...arrived with ugly, thick-rubber bangers, a futile
attempt to meet U.S. crash standards. The Midget

died in '79, not enough room under the bonnet for air-pollution gear. Midgets needed three little wipers. The windshield was too small for two standard ones. When I ran out of small talk on dates, I turned...

Seaford embraces role in former slave's escape to freedom

02/17/2014

News Journal - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...marker that tells a condensed version of the story.(Page 2 of 2)"They were nearly arrested," said Blackwell. Blackwell believes Tilly was enslaved in Maryland at the time of her escape because on Oct. 21, 1856, the sidewheeler steamboat Kent left Baltimore heading south down the Chesapeake Bay...

MD (11)

The chicken tax hits the fan [Editorial]

02/17/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...that poultry waste is an enormous problem in this state because of the harm it does when it runs off land and into streams, rivers and eventually, the Chesapeake Bay. It's a major source of nitrogen and phosphorus, particularly in Eastern Shore tributaries. But we are also sympathetic to the argument...

The chicken tax hits the fan [Editorial]

02/17/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

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[Clip](#)

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Schuh pushes to exempt Arundel from stormwater fees

02/17/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...10 jurisdictions that are required to collect a fee from property owners to help pay for projects that reduce polluted stormwater runoff that harms the Chesapeake Bay. Schuh, a Gibson Island Republican, voted for the state bill requiring the fees in 2012. He said, however, that Anne Arundel's fees...

Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco

02/17/2014

WMDT-TV - Online

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[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations. About Trans Energy, Inc. Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale Forward-looking statements in

this release do not constitute guarantees of future performance. □ Such forward-looking statements...

**Iran battles pollution with
'clean petrol'-- reports**

02/17/2014

*Jordan Times - Washington
D.C. Bureau - Online*

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[Clip](#)

TEHRAN Iran is turning to environmentally friendly Euro-4 emissions standard petrol in major cities to battle worsening air pollution which claims thousands of lives every year, media reports said Monday. Some eight million litres of clean gasoline was distributed to 90...

**Congregations, nonprofits
work to address stormwater
pollution**

02/17/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

Once, when heavy rain hit the roof of the Maryland Presbyterian Church in Towson, there was so much runoff that it would wash away the wood chips and soil that cover the children's play...

**W.Va. residents still wary of
water**

02/17/2014

*Cumberland Times-News -
Online*

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[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

**Ex-Salisbury man kills
Florida deputy, then self**

02/17/2014

Daily Times - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...afternoon Holtermann was "a subject of interest" in connection with some August burglaries in the Fruitland area. His criminal history extended across Chesapeake Bay. He pleaded guilty to robbery charges in Baltimore County Circuit Court in 2009 and was sentenced to seven years in prison. He was...

**Dave Wilson's opinion:
Program Open Space funding
should be restored**

02/17/2014

Daily Times - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

Farmers and other landowners are profoundly disappointed to see that Maryland's proposed 2015 budget eliminates any new funding for Program Open Space. Since 1969, this program has created state and local parks,...

**SUN INVESTIGATES
Groups target inconsistencies
in immigration enforcement**

02/16/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

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[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...patchwork of local law enforcement policies across the country. The advocates say the extended detainment can heighten the chance of deportation. In Maryland, most counties honor requests by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to hold immigrants for additional time beyond when they would ordinarily...

SUN POLL O'Malley lags in

02/16/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)

bid for president

[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...winning the Democratic primary election in his own state. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outpolled O'Malley by nearly 10 to 1 among likely Maryland Democratic voters asked to name their top choice among four possible candidates to be the party's standard-bearer in the 2016 presidential...

PA (40)

Lawn and garden: Beware de-icing the Chesapeake Bay

02/18/2014

Public Opinion - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...flushed down storm drains Penn State Extension Melting snow and ice in January 2014 carry de-icing material downstream, and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. What are you sending into the bay this winter? (Photo by George Hurd) Penn State Extension environmental educator George Hurd discusses...

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit

02/18/2014

Williamsport Sun-Gazette - Online

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[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,111 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps. Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included...

Lake Twp. might host frack-water waste site

02/18/2014

Times Leader - Online

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[Clip](#)

...facility in Lake Township, where it proposes to hold water used in hydraulic fracturing. Waveco Energy Services, a company that supplies water to natural-gas drilling companies, has applied for a variance through the Luzerne County Planning Commission to allow the property — which is more than 600 total...

YOUR OPINION: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

02/18/2014

Times Leader - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...Insurance Act.” The Republican-controlled House had not scheduled it for a vote as of last week, but the Republican leadership already has indicated it will water down the Senate bill. We call on Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, to give this important bill an up or down vote in the lower chamber and...

Letter to the editor | Put gas line safety first

02/18/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

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[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...incident rates are getting alarming for an industry that is supported by our governor as being safe. With the current rapid development of the

Solobay announces run for re-election	02/18/2014	<i>Observer-Reporter - Online</i>	<u>Te</u> <u>Vie</u> <u>xt</u> <u>w</u> <u>Clip</u>
<p>Marcellus gas drilling here in the commonwealth, more stringent enforcement of environmental and safety rules must be approved. The current inspection scheduling...</p> <p>...chance law are among his accomplishments in the Senate. He also said he advocated for safe energy policy, most notably natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale. "During the last four years, I have worked to bring together local business officials and members of the Legislature to strike...</p>			
Crosby lecture speaker announced	02/18/2014	<i>Observer-Reporter - Online</i>	<u>Te</u> <u>Vie</u> <u>xt</u> <u>w</u> <u>Clip</u>
<p>...ship journalist of the 132-foot brigantine Robert C. Seamans, studying along with 37 researchers the amount of plastic and Japanese tsunami debris in the water. His National Geographic dispatches of the findings on the pollution in the Pacific Ocean can be found at</p>			
Thunder/Enlightning, Feb. 18, 2014	02/18/2014	<i>Republican & Herald - Online</i>	<u>Te</u> <u>Vie</u> <u>xt</u> <u>w</u> <u>Clip</u>
<p>...by asking questions. We can help them out by going to these meetings, sewer, borough and water. Shenandoah So coal is that bad. Well, excuse me. Fracking is another thing we need to worry about. We should not need to pay taxes for the roads and bridges to be repaired. The other states are taxing...</p> <p>Berwick-based company applies to build natural gas wastewater treatment plant</p>			
	02/18/2014	<i>Citizens' Voice - Online, The</i>	<u>Te</u> <u>Vie</u> <u>xt</u> <u>w</u> <u>Clip</u>
<p>...already applied to the Luzerne County zoning hearing board for a use variance to build a recycling center to process water used in hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" on an acre of land leased from 4-P Realty, located off Meeker Outlet Road at Sholtis Road. A zoning hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m. March...</p>			
Lehigh Valley fly fishing seminar in March	02/18/2014	<i>Morning Call - Online</i>	<u>Te</u> <u>Vie</u> <u>xt</u> <u>w</u> <u>Clip</u>
<p>...Fish & Game Association, 4190 Wood Drive, Lehigh Township. The event benefits the group's free Youth Education Day. Tickets are \$15 at the door. Marcellus Shale discussion at fly-fishing show: The Fly Fishing Show at the Lancaster County Convention Center, 3 E. Vine Street, Lancaster, will...</p>			
A break with the past	02/17/2014	<i>Northeast Pennsylvania Weekender - Online</i>	<u>Te</u> <u>Vie</u> <u>xt</u> <u>w</u>

Clip

ASHLEY — The demolition of the Huber Breaker that began in January is erasing one of the last remaining significant structures of mining history in the Wyoming Valley. The Huber was built in 1938, and began processing anthracite coal in February 1939. At the time, the Huber...

Native Americans vow a last stand to block Keystone XL pipeline

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

...Eagle figures that building a crude oil pipeline from Canada to the U.S. Gulf Coast would bring little to Indian Country besides more crime and dirty water, but she doubts that Native Americans will ever get the U.S. government to block the \$7 billion project. "There is no way for Native...

Be wary of forest drilling

02/17/2014

Republican & Herald - Online

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[Clip](#)

...reaction to that unavailability. After the state already had authorized drilling leases on nearly half of the 1.5 million acres it owns across the Marcellus Shale development area, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources studied what land remained. It found that the remaining...

Chambersburg hopes to fuel vehicles with natural gas

02/17/2014

Public Opinion - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

...environmentally friendly than diesel or gasoline, according to NGVA. CNG is about \$1.50 less per gallon than gasoline. With the production of natural gas from Marcellus shale and other deposits the price of CNG is projected to remain stable for more than a decade. Gov. Tom Corbett in May announced

a...

NY state eyes study's high-speed rail proposals

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

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[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...project. State officials say high-speed trains can boost tourism and economic development in the upstate region, as well as reduce highway traffic and pollution. Improving Amtrak's on-time record and increasing the frequency of trains running between Manhattan and Buffalo would move New York state...

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water

02/17/2014

Courier-Express - Online

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[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...Monday caused the biggest weather disruptions of the Sochi Olympics so far, with a biathlon race and a Alex Sanz In this Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014 photo, water brought in by tankers and military vehicles is seen being distributed, in Charleston, W. Va. A chemical leak in the Elk River left residents...

1 month after spill, W.

02/17/2014

Lebanon Daily News - Online, [Te](#) [Vie](#)

Virginians wary of water

The

[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

In this Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014 photo, water brought in by tankers and military vehicles is seen being distributed, in Charleston, W. Va. A chemical leak in the Elk River left residents...

Researcher still has passion for medical mysteries

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...humans. Using the index, public health officials could determine when they needed to spring into action, Haley said. Early intervention with chemical pesticides could prevent another West Nile epidemic. But only if politics doesn't get in the way. "The dilemma is whether our community will have...

Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco

02/17/2014

WICU/WSEE - TV - Online

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...with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations. About Trans Energy, Inc. Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale oil and gas exploration and development company, headquartered in the Appalachian Basin. Further information can be found on the Company's...

Wood pellet stoves help some stave off rising heating costs

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...Pellet stoves and wood burning stoves can vary widely in efficiency and operating costs. Outdoor wood "boilers" are inefficient and produce a lot of air pollution, Knaebe said. "It's almost worse than a campfire," he said. Starting in 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency wants to reduce...

Upper Bucks Superfund deal reached

02/17/2014

Morning Call - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...Co. paid more than \$63 million to the government to resolve claims for environmental cleanups at 39 sites across 21 states. The payout was under the Maryland-based company's bankruptcy plan of reorganization, according to the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency...

Marburger squares off against Metcalfe

02/17/2014

Cranberry Eagle - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...moving away from funding schools using property taxes and go toward using earned income taxes instead. He said he also supports the development of Marcellus Shale natural gas, and feels there should be more education for jobs in that field. "It's going to bring the jobs," Marburger said. ...

**Public forum slated on
sewage upgrade**

02/17/2014

Cranberry Eagle - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

**CRANBERRY TWP — The township on
Wednesday will have an open house to provide
residents with information about the proposed
Brush Creek sewage treatment plant expansion.
Township manager Jerry Andree said officials
have been working on the project for more than
a year and a half...**

**Jim Hillibish: A Midge was
the sweetest car on Earth -
when it ran**

02/17/2014

Carbondale News - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...arrived with ugly, thick-rubber bangers, a futile attempt to meet U.S. crash standards. The Midget died in '79, not enough room under the bonnet for air-pollution gear. Midgets needed three little wipers. The windshield was too small for two standard ones. When I ran out of small talk on dates, I turned...

**Marburger squares off
against Metcalfe**

02/17/2014

Butler Eagle - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

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**The Chevron Guarantee:
Our well won't explode...or
your pizza is free!**

02/17/2014

philly.com

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...horrible shock -- the sound of a massive explosion in their backyards. The source of the blast and the intensely hot fire that followed was a Chevron fracking well that had been set to begin production, but instead shot orange flames high into the air and gave off loud hissing sounds that could...

**Jim Hillibish: A Midge was
the sweetest car on Earth -
when it ran**

02/17/2014

Villager - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

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**1 month after spill, W.
Virginians wary of water**

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...during a legislative public meeting, in Charleston, W. Va., about a chemical leak in the Elk River. More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, many residents are

not convinced of the water's safety. Davis has lived
in Kanawha County...

**NC Gov. McCrory briefed on
Duke coal ash lawsuit**

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy,
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\$50 billion corporation \$99,000 to resolve
violations over groundwater contamination leaching
from two huge coal ash dumps. Environmentalists
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included...

**Police still awaiting access to
well pad**

02/17/2014

Herald-Standard - Online [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...reported Sunday that the fire had self-extinguished
Saturday afternoon. The fire began at 6:45 a.m. Feb.
11, when an explosion rocked the Lanco 7H
Marcellus shale well pad and resulted in a fire that
burned for about four days. The missing worker has
been identified by a Texas company as one...

**1 month after spill, W.
Virginians wary of water**

02/17/2014

*Williamsport Sun-Gazette -
Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — More than a month
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02/17/2014

Times Leader - Online [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

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**1 month after spill, West
Virginians wary of water**

02/17/2014

Observer-Reporter - Online [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — More than a month after
chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water
supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up,
drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs
of water...

**Royal mistreatment: The AG
should probe Chesapeake's
leases**

02/17/2014

*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette -
Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

Pennsylvania property owners who lease their land
for natural gas drilling want a couple of things.
Feeling like a sucker is not one of them. Yet that's
the experience of many northern Pennsylvanians
who are doing...

Health Care Heroes

02/17/2014

Risk & Insurance - Online[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

... "I have never felt that we were in a better place than we are right now," Brady said. Communication is Key When one HR director for an oil and gas drilling services company was holding employee meetings to discuss the introduction of a high-deductible plan, she faced resistance. The materials...

Community digest

02/17/2014

Citizens' Voice - Online, The[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

Wyoming Valley Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition will meet at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the American Legion building, Route 415, Dallas Memorial Highway, Dallas...

Race for US representative heats up

02/17/2014

Pocono Record - Online[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...\$15 an hour minimum wage, issuing federal bonds to rebuild the nation's roads, bridges and other infrastructure and imposing a moratorium on hydraulic fracking. He is the second Democrat to announce plans to seek the nomination to run against Marino. Lycoming County businessman Scott Brion has...

Shenango coke should stop fouling the air

02/17/2014

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Online[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

Bravo to the Group Against Smog and Pollution for filing an intent to sue the Shenango coke works on Neville Island (Pollution Group Says It Will Sue Coke Works, Feb. 12). Lets...

Kerry on climate: The secretary delivers a timely lesson on carbon

02/17/2014

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Online[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

Secretary of State John Kerry, during a visit Sunday to Jakarta, Indonesia, addressed the increasingly pressing issue of climate change. He was speaking to Indonesians, but he could have just as easily, given the relevance and importance of his remarks, been speaking...

State should focus on efficient fuels

02/16/2014

Citizens' Voice - Online, The[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...of coal each year. During the recent cold snaps, it has burned up to 35 tons a day. And its coal use is constant because it also uses the fuel for hot water generation. SCI-Waymart's coal bill is more than \$1 million a year. Gas is the new predominant fuel and industry in Pennsylvania and...

VA (13)**Lawrence Kudlow: Janet**

02/18/2014

Northern Virginia Daily -[Te](#) [Vie](#)

Yellen's problem		Online	xt w Clip
...the OECD developed countries. The EPA is going to destroy the coal industry. The Obama administration refuses to open up federal lands for oil-and-gas fracking and drilling, even though the energy revolution is a high-paying job creator. And the National Labor Relations Board is pushing for snap...			
Renovations at Culpeper High School near completion	02/17/2014	<i>Culpeper Times - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...Central Office as the last remaining phase in the plan to be implemented. Spencer stated that along with more renovation phases, there needs to be more asbestos abatement efforts. He said, "Anything we find, we are trying to take care of." The next abatement will start in mid-March in the band and...			
"No more Blackstreet"; Sheen engaged; Henson dies	02/17/2014	<i>Virginian-Pilot - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...lesson we can all use. [embedded content] ShowBiz Minute: BAFTA, Westwood, Box Office Gravity' wins big at the BAFTAs; Westwood is all about the Fracking; 'The Lego Movie' stays at no.1.			
Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco	02/17/2014	<i>WRIC-TV - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations. About Trans Energy, Inc. Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale Forward-looking statements in this release do not constitute guarantees of future performance. □ Such forward-looking statements...			
Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco	02/17/2014	<i>WWBT-TV - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
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Fracking: A Cracking Success or Much Ado About Nothing?	02/17/2014	<i>Valve Magazine - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
Fracking not only proves to be a boon for the U.S. economy, but also for the valve industry. Some EU states, however, are stalling. Fracking...			
Source of diesel fuel at Authority undetermined	02/17/2014	<i>Southwest Times - Online, The</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip

...diesel fuel,” said McCutchan. Despite the investigation, he said neither the source of the fuel nor the amount of fuel spilled could be determined.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was notified of the incident and how the Authority's staff responded to the incident. ...

Fort Worth watering restrictions could become permanent 02/17/2014 *Water Environment Research - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#) [xt](#) [w](#) [Clip](#)

...Water Department took in \$11 million below anticipated revenue last year because of the two-day a week watering restrictions and a decrease in oil and gas-drilling water use. As a result of conservation and to anticipate the rising cost of water, the city is raising water rates at the same time...

Industry News - Fort Worth watering restrictions could become permanent 02/17/2014 *Water Environment Research - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#) [xt](#) [w](#) [Clip](#)

...Water Department took in \$11 million below anticipated revenue last year because of the two-day a week watering restrictions and a decrease in oil and gas-drilling water use. As a result of conservation and to anticipate the rising cost of water, the city is raising water rates at the same time...

Olympics Set To Transform Rio -- But For Better Or Worse? 02/17/2014 *WVTF-FM - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#) [xt](#) [w](#) [Clip](#)

...swept across Brazil last summer. People are concerned not only about the money but whether in the end what was promised will be delivered. Protesting Pollution On a recent Saturday morning, a group gathered on Ipanema beach to protest the high level of water pollution in Rio's...

EPA officials visit South Boston Thursday to meet with public 02/17/2014 *News & Record - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#) [xt](#) [w](#) [Clip](#)

News SoVaNow.com / February 17, 2014
Representatives with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be visiting South Boston this week to field questions and listen to community concerns in the wake of the Duke...

CLARK, JANE L. 02/17/2014 *Petersburg Progress-Index - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#) [xt](#) [w](#) [Clip](#)

...years, retired from her position as a home economist for Commonwealth Natural Gas in Petersburg. Mrs. Clark was a past president and member of the Chesapeake Bay Garden Club, and had Life Membership in National Federation of State Garden Clubs and Virginia Federation of State Garden Clubs....

Column | Fraim's circle of influence is upper crust 02/15/2014 *Virginian-Pilot - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#) [xt](#) [w](#)

Clip

...Harvey Lindsay, chairman of the real estate company that bears his name; D. Bart Frye Jr., known for developing Norfolk's East Beach community on the Chesapeake Bay; Robert M. Stanton, who led the effort to redevelop downtown Norfolk; Buddy Gadams, who has several residential developments under...

WV (42)

Drilling waste bill concerns local officials

02/18/2014

Journal - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...provisions in the bill. The DEP requested the measure, for which no law currently provides, according to a press release. Following a surge in use of the Marcellus Shale in the northern central part of the state, in 2011, the Legislature required the oil and gas industry to landfill the waste from drilling...

One Month Later, Many Still Wary of Using Water

02/18/2014

Intelligencer - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON (AP) - More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

One month after spill, Charleston residents wary of water

02/18/2014

Journal - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON- More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

County Commission addresses concern over abandoned school

02/18/2014

Williamson Daily News - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

...portions of the roof falling in, windows broken out and walls caving in. "The issue with demolishing this building is the cost it would take to have the asbestos removed that is in the floor tiles that becomes a health hazard when disturbed," said Commission President Greg "Hootie" Smith.

County...

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water

02/18/2014

Wetzel Chronicle - Online

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[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

House Judiciary hears pleas

02/18/2014

Register-Herald - Online, The [Te](#) [Vie](#)

to prohibit landfills from taking fracking waste			xt w Clip
...would be a good place to raise their three children. Now, though, Rahall questions that decision because, she says waste from hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking, is being brought to a sediment pond near her Fayette County home and then injected into a well she believes is near the source...			
County Commission addresses concern over abandoned school	02/18/2014	<i>Gilbert Times - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...portions of the roof falling in, windows broken out and walls caving in. "The issue with demolishing this building is the cost it would take to have the asbestos removed that is in the floor tiles that becomes a health hazard when disturbed," said Commission President Greg "Hootie" Smith. County...			
Feds knew Dietz Hollow Likely Contaminated 1979, But Failed to do Anything	02/17/2014	<i>HuntingtonNews.net</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...min ago by Tony Rutherford HuntingtonNews.Net Reporter Dietz Hollow (a.k.a. the Huntington Landfill) was placed on a preliminary listing of potential Superfund sites across the United States on December 1, 1979, according to Environmental Protection Administration Region III Technical Action Status...			
Adult Children of Asbestos Sufferers Urged to Contact Mesothelioma Victims Center	02/17/2014	<i>WTRF-TV - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
...misdiagnosed with pneumonia. This year between 2,500 and 3,000 US citizens will be diagnosed with mesothelioma*. Mesothelioma is 100% attributable to exposure to asbestos*. One-third of diagnosed victims of mesothelioma served in the US Navy. Other high-risk work groups for exposure to asbestos include:...			
Adult Children of Asbestos Sufferers Urged to Contact Mesothelioma Victims Center	02/17/2014	<i>WOWK-TV - Online</i>	Te Vie xt w Clip
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Adult Children of Asbestos Sufferers Urged to Contact Mesothelioma Victims Center 02/17/2014 *State Journal - Online, The* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

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Adult Children of Asbestos Sufferers Urged to Contact Mesothelioma Victims Center 02/17/2014 *WBOY-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

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Research and Investment Prospect Analysis of China's Excavator Industry, 2013-2017 02/17/2014 *WBOY-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...market shares continued to drop to 24.43% and 16.27% respectively; European brands remained stable with market share 12.95%. For reducing environmental pollution, at present, different countries' governments formulated policies and laws for compulsory emission targets of motor vehicle so as to prohibit...

Research and Investment Prospect Analysis of China's Excavator Industry, 2013-2017 02/17/2014 *WTRF-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

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Research and Investment Prospect Analysis of China's Excavator Industry, 2013-2017 02/17/2014 *WVNS-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

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Research and Investment Prospect Analysis of China's Excavator Industry, 2013- 2017	02/17/2014	WOWK-TV - Online	Te	Vie xt w Clip
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Group Seeks More Scrutiny for Eastern Ohio Mine Plan	02/17/2014	WTRF-TV - Online	Te	Vie xt w Clip
	...requesting extra scrutiny of a company's plans for an underground coal mine in eastern Ohio because of the January chemical spill that contaminated the water supply for 300,000 West Virginians. The mine south of Carrollton is planned by Rosebud Mining Co. That company's owner also owns...			
Freedom Industries cleanup continues; contamination extent still unknown	02/17/2014	Charleston Gazette - Online, The	Te	Vie xt w Clip
	...site's chemical storage tanks, and still don't have a clear idea of how much of which materials could have contaminated soil at the site. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is overseeing the cleanup, which is being carried out by Freedom Industries and contractors for the...			
1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water	02/17/2014	Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram Online	Te	Vie xt w Clip
	More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...			
House panel to hold hearing on drilling waste tonight	02/17/2014	Charleston Gazette - Online, The	Te	Vie xt w Clip
	...will hear from the public this evening on a bill aimed at exempting from West Virginia's landmark landfill tonnage limits waste from the boom in			

natural gas drilling in the state's Marcellus Shale region. The House Judiciary Committee scheduled the public hearing on the bill (HB4411) for 5...

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water 02/17/2014 *Intelligencer - Online, The* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water 02/17/2014 *Elkins Inter-Mountain - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco 02/17/2014 *WBOY-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
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...with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations. About Trans Energy, Inc. Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale oil and gas exploration and development company, headquartered in the Appalachian Basin. Further information can be found on the Company's...

Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco 02/17/2014 *WOWK-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
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Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco 02/17/2014 *WVNS-TV - Online* [Te](#) [Vie](#)
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**Citizen groups push for
broader water reforms**

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...the state Capitol on Monday, hoping to convince lawmakers that last month's Elk River chemical spill is proof that major changes are needed in how West Virginia protects its water. As part of its annual E-Day, West Virginia Environmental Council organizers urged the Legislature...

**Drilling waste could go to
landfills**

02/17/2014

MetroNews - Online [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Permitted landfills would be allowed to accept more cuttings and waste from natural gas drilling sites with a bill that's now pending in the House Judiciary Committee. A public hearing on HB 4411, which the House Energy Committee...

**1 month after spill, W.
Virginians wary of water**

02/17/2014

Journal - Online, The [Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

**Local student launching
partnership with NASA**

02/17/2014

Journal - Online, The [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...only a handful of individuals who receive the award each year. Ellis, a graduate of Jefferson High School who studied at Shepherd University and West Virginia University, did not initially plan on entering a career in the sciences. According to proud parents Karen and Roger Ellis, Justin enjoyed...

**NC Gov. McCrory briefed on
Duke coal ash lawsuit**

02/17/2014

WOWK-TV - Online [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,000 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps. Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included...

**Citizens gear up for drilling
waste hearing**

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The [Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...up for a public hearing this evening on a bill aimed at exempting from West Virginia's landmark landfill tonnage limits waste from the boom in natural gas drilling in the state's Marcellus Shale region. The House Judiciary Committee scheduled the public hearing on the bill (HB4411) for 5...

Editorials from around Ohio

02/17/2014

Intelligencer - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...are pretty much in sync on taxes in general: the lower, the better. But they have different visions when it comes to a severance tax on oil and natural gas drilling, and that's to the benefit of eastern Ohio. Kasich wants a higher tax on drilling activity than many Republicans in the Legislature...

**NC Gov. McCrory briefed on
Duke coal ash lawsuit**

02/17/2014

WTRF-TV - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,111 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps. Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included...

Residents still wary of water

02/17/2014

Herald-Dispatch - Online, The

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[Clip](#)

Feb. 17, 2014 @ 09:24 PM CHARLESTON — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water...

**Citizens speak against frack
waste bill**

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Of 20 speakers at a House hearing Monday, only one -- an industry representative -- spoke in favor of a bill that would exempt natural gas drilling waste in the Marcellus Shale region from the state's landfill tonnage limits.

Charlie Burd, executive director of the Independent...

**NC Gov. McCrory briefed on
Duke coal ash lawsuit**

02/17/2014

Intelligencer - Online, The

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
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[Clip](#)

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02/17/2014

Journal - Online, The

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John Ellison Visits WVU-P

02/17/2014

WTAP-TV - Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

Born on the banks of the Kanawha River, John Ellison left his hometown of Montgomery, West Virginia at the age of 17 with all of his clothes packed in a small grocery bag. Ellison first used his coal mining father's guitar in a...

Report from Athens shows impact of shale

02/17/2014

Parkersburg News and Sentinel
Online

[Te](#) [Vie](#)
[xt](#) [w](#)
[Clip](#)

...area residents. * The influence of shale development on the local economy. As a major research institution located within the state's Utica and Marcellus shale plays, Ohio University has a responsibility to address the complex economic, social, environmental and technical questions associated...

Fact-Checking the Bill Nye-Marsha Blackburn Climate Change 'Debate' | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Wire, The

NBC

If you are not the sort of person who watches Meet the Press (because you are not an old person), you may have missed Sunday's "debate" between Tennessee Rep. Marsha Blackburn and Mr. William Nye, Science Guy. Allow me to summarize: There is no actual debate over climate change. Allow me to summarize at greater length: Blackburn was full of misinformation and Nye seemed sleepy.

I pulled out the assertions presented by the participants in the discussion and evaluated them for truth. That's the point of a debate, right? To use facts to make a point? The Meet the Press conversation mirrored the climate change "debate" at large, which is far less a debate than a siege between people who will and people who will not accept the presented scientific facts.

Here's an example of how this will work. The segment, which you can watch here , begins inauspiciously, with a quote from NBC weatherguy Al Roker.

Al Roker :

Is it a natural cycle? Is it — is it due to human interference or human conditions that

we have created? That remains open to debate. But there is no doubt the climate is changing.

Rating: False

What Roker's doing here is what you might call skepticism-once-removed. He's too smart and too prominent to deny that climate change exists, but he also doesn't want to get nasty emails from people who hate the idea that anyone would say climate change exists. (I, however, welcome such emails !) So he walks a wishy-washy and incorrect middle road: climate change is real, but is it humanity's fault?

It is humanity's fault, at least according to the same scientists that say it is happening, which is nearly every climate scientist with only a few isolated exceptions. A survey of climate studies completed last year found that 97 percent of 4,000 studies blamed human activity for warmer temperatures — more greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-burning leading to more heat trapped in the atmosphere. Roker is wrong.

That was an error before the discussion even began, compiled when host David Gregory showed a snippet of a climate change denier from the Cato Institute, which was completely wrong. (He claimed that people lived more places which explained an increase in expensive disasters. Which doesn't explain the big increase in such disasters in the U.S.)

So what did the guests have to say? After Blackburn reminded people that Bill Nye was "an engineer and actor," she insisted that they look at "the information that we get from climate scientists." Here are the show's other factual assertions, in chronological order.

Blackburn :

Even the president's own Science and Technology Office head Mister Holdren says no one single weather event is due specifically to climate change.

Rating: True

In fact, almost every scientist says that no single weather event is due to climate change specifically. Climate and weather are not the same thing: the former addresses long-term trends; the latter, short-term events. (This video offers a terrific visualization of the difference.) So while climate change will mean more of certain types of events — rainier storms, more ferocious hurricanes, more flooding — they themselves don't prove climate change. Blackburn's both responding to how Gregory framed the segment, using recent weather events as a news hook, but also intentionally trying to suggest that there's no link between weather and climate. Which, in the aggregate, there is.

Or, as Nye says in his rebuttal: "That you cannot tie any one event to that is not the same as doubt about the whole thing."

Blackburn :

And when you look at the fact that we have gone from 320 parts per million 0.032, to 0.040 four hundred parts per million, what you do is realize it's very slight.

Rating: False

Blackburn tries to downplay the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by talking about the amounts in very, very small decimals. Which they are: If I took \$400 versus \$320 out of your million dollars, you wouldn't be terribly upset.

But that's intentionally misleading. The difference between the two is an increase of 25 percent over the past 50 years — after thousands and thousands of years of it being lower. Last year, The New York Times explained that the level of carbon dioxide now in our atmosphere is a "concentration not seen on the earth for millions of years." And at that point, "the world's ice caps were smaller, and the sea level might have been as much as 60 or 80 feet higher."

Why hasn't that happened now? Because "it takes a long time to melt ice," as one scientist told the Times . But we're getting there.

Blackburn :

[T]here is not consensus [on climate change] and you can look at the latest IPCC Report and look at Doctor Lindzen from MIT. His rejection of that or Judith Curry ... from Georgia Tech. There is not consensus there.

Rating: False

This is just cherry-picking. Finding two people who disagree with the thousands of other scientists doesn't constitute debate any more than scoring a field goal when you're down 70 points makes the game a tie.

What's more, as MSNBC's Ned Resnikoff points out , Blackburn didn't even pick very good cherries.

Blackburn cited two climate scientists to make her point: One who has been “ wrong about nearly every major climate argument he's made over the past two decades ,” according to fellow environmental scientist Dana Nuccitelli, and another who recently said, “ it's clear that adding more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere will warm the planet .”

Blackburn :

[E]ven Director McCarthy from the EPA in answering questions from Congressman Pompeo before our committee, said reaching all of the 26 U.S. goals is not going to have an impact globally.

Rating: Mostly true

During the discussion between Kansas Rep. Mike Pompeo and EPA administrator Gina McCarthy (which can be seen here), McCarthy did say that the 26 steps the EPA would like to adopt to scale back America's greenhouse gas pollution wouldn't, in themselves, solve climate change. That's because other countries — like China — wouldn't be affected and would continue to pump out carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses.

But that doesn't mean that there would be no impact. If the American example of fighting emissions could serve as a model for other countries, it would have broader value. Fighting climate change is not something we can win by ourselves.

We didn't win World War II by ourselves either. It took multiple countries coming together to defeat the Axis threat. What McCarthy, the head of our environmental military, suggests is that we get on a war footing.

Nye :

[W]hat I would encourage everybody to do is back up and let's agree on the facts.

Would you say that the Antarctic has less ice than it used to?

Rating: False

Let's get this out of the way: Bill Nye looked tired. He was in California, and it was early, but there's no question this was not the perky Bill Nye that used to freak out at us in his science TV show.

That said, Nye simply misspoke. The Antarctic has not seen significantly less ice. As I noted last month, because there is land under Antarctica, its behavior is different than the ice in the Arctic. "[Antarctica] is losing continental ice while sea ice has been increasing by about 1 percent a decade," one scientist explained to The Guardian .

Nye meant to refer to the Arctic , where sea ice has continually been decreasing, to the point that it now serves as an effective shipping lane in summer months. How do I know he meant to refer to the Arctic? He held up a picture of the Arctic, as seen above.

At some point, probably in the next decade, the Arctic will be ice-free during the summer. That's the fact Nye wants Blackburn to agree to.

Blackburn :

Now, you know, when you look at the social cost of carbon, and there is a lot of ambiguity around that, what you also need to be doing is looking at the benefits of carbon and what that has on increased agriculture production.

Rating: False

Blackburn's main point — in fact, the main point of the Republican colleagues and of the fossil fuel industry at large — is that stopping climate change would be expensive. Which is largely true: It means that coal plants and heavy industry wouldn't be able to release greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere for free where the long-term costs would be borne by other people in the form of increased floods or droughts.

ThinkProgress did a good job rebutting the "CO2 is good for plants" schtick. While small amounts of the gas are critical for plants to grow, it points out that the California drought, almost certainly exacerbated by if not entirely due to climate change, has hardly been a boon for the state's agricultural centers.

The site also explains a bit more about the "social cost of carbon." That cost "is the formula used by federal regulators to calculate how carbon pollution harms public health, the environment, property value, and other issues" — and could be as much as \$129 per ton by 2020 under some emissions scenarios.

Again, Blackburn claims there's ambiguity to the figure. In part that's because the cost

varies depending on how much we keep emitting. If Blackburn and her colleagues accept a value for that "social cost," her cost-benefit analysis starts to work against polluters. After all, any cost to prevent the emission of carbon dioxide that's less than \$129 a ton (or whatever the final figure) becomes preferable under any cost-benefit analysis, even if it mandates regulation of the industry. And polluters and their advocates don't want to incur any additional cost, because it's bad for profits.

Nye :

So the fewer very dirty coal-fired power plants we have, the better. The less energy we waste, the better. The less inefficient our transportation systems are, the better. The more reliable our electricity transmission systems are, the better.

Rating: True

If you want to fight climate change, you have to fight carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions. And if you want to fight those emissions, you need to limit emissions from coal-burning power plants, the main source of CO₂ emissions . And you need to use less energy in general, reducing the need to burn coal to create electricity. You need to see less waste in the transmission process. It's a pretty simple calculus.

Blackburn :

Bill doesn't like coal-fired electricity plants. You've got 1,200 that are coming up in other nations right now.

Rating: True

The World Resources Institute released a report in 2012 that articulated the upcoming boom in new coal plants — some 1,199 planned in 59 countries. In some cases, these are developing countries that are starting to see an emergent and energy-hungry middle class. In other cases, it's additional capacity in nations like China.

Blackburn's point from this is theoretically that we should look for a "way to achieve efficiencies" in coal-burning, which isn't really clearly explained in this context. But really she's undermining her own point: the issue of carbon emissions is only becoming more urgent, and the need to provide a disincentive for building those 1,199 plants more critical. Which Obama has proposed. In his climate change speech last year, the president introduced new policies aimed at making new coal-burning plants less economically appealing.

Blackburn :

Carbon emissions are at the lowest they've been since 1994.

Rating: False

It's true that carbon emissions had been on the decline, hitting levels in 2012 that were the lowest in a long time, but in 2013 emissions went back up . While increased efficiency, one of the factors Blackburn cites, did help keep emissions low, the two other big reasons emissions fell during recent years were the slower economy (resulting in less electricity use) and the natural gas boom from fracking (meaning less coal-burning). To keep emissions down, we would need to keep moving from coal to natural gas as an electricity source, which Blackburn doesn't want to do.

David Gregory :
This debate goes on.

Rating: False

The debate is over. If Meet the Press covered the topic more — in 2013, according to Media Matters , it failed "to offer a single substantial mention of climate change" — Gregory might know that.

[Return to Top](#)

Lawsuit cites N.Y. delays with "fracking" study | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

NAREIT SmartBrief

A group claiming to represent 70,000 landowners has filed a lawsuit against the state of New York and Gov. Andrew Cuomo, saying delays in a study of hydraulic fracturing of natural gas wells are costing their clients financial gains. New York halted "fracking" in 2008 for an environmental study, and in January, state environmental commissioner Joe Martens said there will be no regulations before April 2015.

Published in Brief

[Return to Top](#)

NY state eyes study's high-speed rail proposals | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Washington Examiner - Online

AP Staff Writer • | FEBRUARY 17, 2014 AT 10:15 AM

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York transportation officials are setting up public hearings to discuss options for an idea that has been kicked around for years but has yet to leave the station: high-speed passenger rail service.

Boosting the speeds of trains traveling Amtrak's Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls has been the goal of industry leaders, elected officials and transit advocates for two decades. Progress may be coming down the line now that the state Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration have scheduled hearings next month in six upstate cities along the 463-mile corridor.

New York was required to conduct the environmental review to be eligible for any new federal funding for high-speed rail, according to DOT spokesman Beau Duffy.

"It has taken longer than anyone had wanted, but we're happy this draft is out and the hearings are scheduled," said Bruce Becker of East Amherst, president of the Empire

State Passengers Association, a passenger rail advocacy group.

The public meetings will be held between March 4 and March 14, starting in Albany and followed by Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, Utica and Poughkeepsie. The public will have the opportunity to view displays and question experts about the plans.

The environmental review analyzes the five most viable higher-speed options for trains with top operating speeds of 79, 90, 110 and 125 mph. The current top speed allowed west of Schenectady is 79 mph, although the study said the current average speed for Amtrak trains traveling between Buffalo and Albany barely tops 50 mph. Trains traveling between Albany and Manhattan can go as fast as 110 mph along some stretches.

The costs of the plans range from \$1.7 billion to \$6.2 billion, with the most expensive calling for construction of a third track dedicated to passenger trains traveling the 273 miles between Schenectady and the Amtrak station in Depew, just east of Buffalo. That plan, favored by Beck's group, would also add a fourth passenger track over a combined distance of nearly 40 miles in five separate locations.

Once the state selects its option, the FRA must sign off on the plan, which isn't expected to happen for an additional six months to a year, Duffy said.

Amtrak must share existing rail lines with CSX freight trains that are given track priority, a situation that frequently causes delays for the passenger trains. The main east-west choke point is the single track that runs between Albany and Schenectady. Upgrades to that 17-mile existing stretch were completed in December, while work on a new second track between the two cities is expected to begin this year, Duffy said.

New York's efforts at high-speed rail, or at least higher-speed service, have not succeeded in the past. In December 2012, the state auctioned off surplus train cars and other rail equipment from a failed project to improve service between Albany and New York City. The state bought the trains and related gear in 1998, during the Pataki administration, to test higher-speed service along the Hudson River. Technical problems and the inability of the tracks to support the faster trains sidelined the project.

State officials say high-speed trains can boost tourism and economic development in the upstate region, as well as reduce highway traffic and pollution. Improving Amtrak's on-time record and increasing the frequency of trains running between Manhattan and Buffalo would move New York state much closer to that goal, Becker said.

"Folks are using Amtrak," Becker said. "With improvement in reliability and shorter trip times, we feel more and more folks will pick Amtrak over flying to New York City or driving."

Web URL: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/article/2119008>

Fact-Checking the Bill Nye-Marsha Blackburn Climate Change 'Debate' | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Wire, The

NBC

If you are not the sort of person who watches Meet the Press (because you are not an old person), you may have missed Sunday's "debate" between Tennessee Rep. Marsha Blackburn and Mr. William Nye, Science Guy. Allow me to summarize: There is no actual debate over climate change. Allow me to summarize at greater length: Blackburn was full of misinformation and Nye seemed sleepy.

I pulled out the assertions presented by the participants in the discussion and evaluated them for truth. That's the point of a debate, right? To use facts to make a point? The Meet the Press conversation mirrored the climate change "debate" at large, which is far less a debate than a siege between people who will and people who will not accept the presented scientific facts.

Here's an example of how this will work. The segment, which you can watch here, begins inauspiciously, with a quote from NBC weatherguy Al Roker.

Al Roker:

Is it a natural cycle? Is it — is it due to human interference or human conditions that we have created? That remains open to debate. But there is no doubt the climate is changing.

Rating: False

What Roker's doing here is what you might call skepticism-once-removed. He's too smart and too prominent to deny that climate change exists, but he also doesn't want to get nasty emails from people who hate the idea that anyone would say climate change exists. (I, however, welcome such emails!) So he walks a wishy-washy and incorrect middle road: climate change is real, but is it humanity's fault?

It is humanity's fault, at least according to the same scientists that say it is happening,

which is nearly every climate scientist with only a few isolated exceptions. A survey of climate studies completed last year found that 97 percent of 4,000 studies blamed human activity for warmer temperatures — more greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-burning leading to more heat trapped in the atmosphere. Roker is wrong.

That was an error before the discussion even began, compiled when host David Gregory showed a snippet of a climate change denier from the Cato Institute, which was completely wrong. (He claimed that people lived more places which explained an increase in expensive disasters. Which doesn't explain the big increase in such disasters in the U.S.)

So what did the guests have to say? After Blackburn reminded people that Bill Nye was "an engineer and actor," she insisted that they look at "the information that we get from climate scientists." Here are the show's other factual assertions, in chronological order.

Blackburn:

Even the president's own Science and Technology Office head Mister Holdren says no one single weather event is due specifically to climate change.

Rating: True

In fact, almost every scientist says that no single weather event is due to climate change specifically. Climate and weather are not the same thing: the former addresses long-term trends; the latter, short-term events. (This video offers a terrific visualization of the difference.) So while climate change will mean more of certain types of events — rainier storms, more ferocious hurricanes, more flooding — they themselves don't prove climate change. Blackburn's both responding to how Gregory framed the segment, using recent weather events as a news hook, but also intentionally trying to suggest that there's no link between weather and climate. Which, in the aggregate, there is.

Or, as Nye says in his rebuttal: "That you cannot tie any one event to that is not the same as doubt about the whole thing."

Blackburn:

And when you look at the fact that we have gone from 320 parts per million 0.032, to 0.040 four hundred parts per million, what you do is realize it's very slight.

Rating: False

Blackburn tries to downplay the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by talking about the amounts in very, very small decimals. Which they are: If I took \$400 versus \$320 out of your million dollars, you wouldn't be terribly upset.

But that's intentionally misleading. The difference between the two is an increase of 25 percent over the past 50 years — after thousands and thousands of years of it being lower. Last year, The New York Times explained that the level of carbon dioxide now in our atmosphere is a "concentration not seen on the earth for millions of years." And at that point, "the world's ice caps were smaller, and the sea level might have been as much as 60 or 80 feet higher."

Why hasn't that happened now? Because "it takes a long time to melt ice," as one scientist told the Times. But we're getting there.

Blackburn:

[T]here is not consensus [on climate change] and you can look at the latest IPCC Report and look at Doctor Lindzen from MIT. His rejection of that or Judith Curry ... from Georgia Tech. There is not consensus there.

Rating: False

This is just cherry-picking. Finding two people who disagree with the thousands of other scientists doesn't constitute debate any more than scoring a field goal when you're down 70 points makes the game a tie.

What's more, as MSNBC's Ned Resnikoff points out, Blackburn didn't even pick very good cherries.

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It's true that carbon emissions had been on the decline, hitting levels in 2012 that were the lowest in a long time, but in 2013 emissions went back up. While increased efficiency, one of the factors Blackburn cites, did help keep emissions low, the two other big reasons emissions fell during recent years were the slower economy (resulting in less electricity use) and the natural gas boom from fracking (meaning less coal-burning). To keep emissions down, we would need to keep moving from coal to natural gas as an electricity source, which Blackburn doesn't want to do.

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Rating: False

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[Return to Top](#)

Janet Yellen's problem | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Human Events

Stock markets cheered Janet Yellen's maiden congressional testimony this past week, as the new Fed chair emphasized the word “continuity” and offered no boat-rocking surprises. Continuity? I assume she means a steady diet of tapered bond purchases that will lead to the end of QE3 this autumn. In other words, investors seemed to think QE has run its course, probably overstayed its welcome, and that it's time the Fed got out of the bond-buying business, since that policy isn't doing much good and may be doing harm.

Ever the Keynesian who subscribes to the non-existent, long-term trade-off between employment and inflation, Yellen did express worries about long-term layoffs and the shrinking size of the labor-participation rate. She's right about that. The labor situation

is subpar.

The employment-to-population ratio is only 58.5 percent, way below its year-2000 peak of 65 percent. The participation rate is a low 62.8 percent, way below its modern average. The Joint Economic Committee estimates that jobs are 4.5 million below the employment trend line since 1960, and 7 million below Ronald Reagan's recovery rate. And average monthly private-payroll increases are only 178,000 in Obama's recovery. Compare that with the Reagan monthly rate of 330,000.

So Yellen is right to be worried about jobs. But she's wrong to think the Fed can do much about this.

Holding back growth and jobs are a series of tax and regulatory barriers that must be fixed if we are to move from secular stagnation back to traditional American prosperity. Obamacare is at the top of the list. The CBO puts the essential job loss at 2.5 million. It will be worse unless Obamacare is repealed.

Perverse Obamacare incentives will penalize industrious people as they climb the ladder of opportunity. They will lose their health care subsidies and land in higher income-tax brackets. This steep subsidy cliff is a work trap that becomes a poverty trap.

If it pays less to work, people will work less. The Fed has nothing to do with this.

But there's more holding back the economy than Obamacare. A recent report by Tax Foundation president Scott Hodge shows that the U.S. has the worst corporate and capital-gains tax structures among the OECD developed countries. The EPA is going to destroy the coal industry. The Obama administration refuses to open up federal lands for oil-and-gas fracking and drilling, even though the energy revolution is a high-paying job creator. And the National Labor Relations Board is pushing for snap "ambush elections" to promote unionization.

These are all job killers, but the Fed has nothing to do with them.

But the Fed does control inflation, which is a monetary phenomenon. And I'll give Yellen and her predecessor Ben Bernanke plenty of credit for today's low 1 percent inflation rate. But I don't understand why the Fed's planners want to raise inflation to around 2.5 percent. Higher inflation is a tax on consumers, families, investors, jobs and growth.

Paul Volcker made this point in a recent speech at the Economic Club of New York. Price stability, not monetary fine-tuning, is good for growth. And price stability, which ultimately means protecting King Dollar, requires clear monetary rules to maintain credibility.

But I'm not seeing any rules.

The Fed has already dropped its 6.5 percent unemployment threshold, which would have signaled a higher fed funds target rate with cash withdrawals from the banking system. No rule has replaced this. And in the fifth year of economic recovery, you have to ask why the Fed central planners are still operating a so-called unconventional policy. Instead, they need to lay the groundwork for normalization, which means higher rates.

Professor Allan Meltzer points out that more than 95 percent of the reserves that the Fed supplied under QE2 and QE3 sit idle on bank balance sheets. That money is not circulating through the economy. M2 money growth hasn't budged from its 5 to 6 range. That \$2.5 trillion in excess reserves has got to be whittled down gradually.

Yet Yellen made no attempt to pave the way for a transition to normalcy. And that includes interest rates. The Taylor rule suggests a 1.25 percent federal funds rate would be appropriate today. And a return to normal interest rates and the end of Fed credit-channeling would help the economy grow.

For most of the time under Paul Volcker and Alan Greenspan, the Fed operated a market-price rule that used gold, commodities, bond spreads and the dollar to guide the money supply and interest rates. It worked. Many now believe a nominal GDP rule would also help. Unfortunately, Yellen has backed away from all of these rules.

It's the job of Congress and the president to create jobs by reforming taxes, regulations and Obamacare. Yellen should limit her focus to stable prices and a reliable King Dollar.

[Return to Top](#)

John Kerry Calls Climate Change 'World's Most Fearsome' Weapon Of Mass Destruction | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Think Progress

Secretary of State John Kerry gave perhaps his strongest climate speech in Indonesia Sunday. He called climate change the “world's most fearsome” weapon of mass destruction and said “the science of climate change is leaping out at us like a scene from a 3D movie. It's warning us; it's compelling us to act.”

At the same time, a must-read new analysis by Oil Change International finds that “all of the scenarios used by the State Department” in their Final Environmental Impact Study (EIS) of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline “result in emissions that put us on a path to 6 degrees C (11°F) of global warming according to the International Energy

Agency (IEA).” Talk about mass destruction!

IEA Chief Economist Fatih Birol famously said of 11°F warming, “even school children know this will have catastrophic implications for all of us.”

Kerry's Jakarta climate speech, the first in a series on the urgency of action, would appear to be utterly irreconcilable with a decision to construct the Keystone XL pipeline, a decision that rests almost entirely on Kerry's shoulders. Kerry explained:

When 97 percent of scientists agree on anything, we need to listen, and we need to respond.

Well, 97 percent of climate scientists have confirmed that climate change is happening and that human activity is responsible. These scientists agree on the causes of these changes and they agree on the potential effects. They agree that the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide contributes heavily to climate change. They agree that the energy sources that we've relied on for decades to fuel our cars and to heat our homes or to air condition our homes, to — all the things that provide us electricity like oil and coal — that these are largely responsible for sending those greenhouse gases up into the atmosphere...

And they agree that, if we continue to go down the same path that we are going down today, the world as we know it will change — and it will change dramatically for the worse.

You can watch the whole speech here:

Sunday's speech is utterly at odds with State's logic-twisting Keystone-friendly

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. For instance, Kerry says:

One of the arguments that we do hear is that it's going to be too expensive to be able to address climate change. I have to tell you, that assertion could not be less grounded in fact. In fact, it's exactly the opposite. Serious analysts understand that the costs of doing nothing far outweigh the costs of investing in solutions now. You do not need a degree in economics or a graduate degree in business in order to understand that the cost of flooding, the cost of drought, the cost of famine, the cost of health care, the cost of addressing this challenge is simply far less — the costs of addressing this challenge are far less than the costs of doing nothing.

Well, since the costs of addressing climate change “are far less” than the cost of inaction — and since fossil fuel combustion is the primary cause of climate change — it seems pretty self-evident that the cheapest climate strategy is to leave the dirtiest pools of carbon in the ground. And there aren't many bigger, dirtier pools of carbon than the Canadian tar sands.

“We can make good on the moral responsibility we all have to leave future generations with a planet that is clean and healthy and sustainable for the future,” Kerry told the audience in Indonesia. “You have a saying, I think, here in Indonesia, ‘Luka di kaki, sakit seluruh badan’... it means ‘when there's a pain in the foot, the whole body feels it,’” he continued. “Well, today in this interconnected world that we all live in, the fact is that hardship anywhere is actually felt by people everywhere. We all see it; we share it.” Well, Keystone is more than a pain in the foot.

I'm not sure if Kerry has thought through the international implications of approving Keystone, as I pointed out last year. The United States has already undermined its standing to cajole other countries into climate commitments by expanding oil and gas drilling as well as coal exports. But none of those were Kerry's decision, whereas Keystone is.

Kerry said in Jakarta that for the problem of WMD, “We all have to approach this challenge together.” Then he added, “The bottom line is this: it is the same thing with climate change. And in a sense, climate change can now be considered another weapon of mass destruction, perhaps the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction.”

Climate change is indeed the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction. And that makes the tar sands a hydrogen bomb, and it makes Keystone a loose nuke delivery system or a poorly guarded WMD. We need to keep the tar sands locked securely under ground where it can't harm our children and future generations.

The U.S. has a serious shot at hitting the 2020 target of a 17 percent cut in CO2 emissions from 2005 levels that Obama made for the 2009 climate talks in Copenhagen — a target embraced in his Climate Action Plan (but utterly ignored by State's EIS). That requires the President to embrace strong emissions reductions from existing coal-fired power plants. But let's not pretend that target is either especially hard to hit or scientifically meaningful (see “Developed Nations Must Cut Emissions In Half By 2020, Says New Study”).

That is to say, the fact Kerry can go to the other big emitters and commit to meeting Obama's pledge is a necessary minimum condition to achieve a climate agreement, but it is not sufficient. He needs some moral standing. He needs to be able to demonstrate to the world the U.S. understands that far deeper cuts are needed post-2020 and that means not sticking new spigots into huge, dirty carbon pools like the tar sands.

Kerry needs to show that his words are more than words, that he actually believes climate change is the most fearsome WMD. Kerry must recommend to Obama that Keystone be killed.

Kerry started as Secretary with clean hands on climate. But approving Keystone would be like dipping his hands into the dirtiest, stickiest tar imaginable — they could never be cleaned again.

The post John Kerry Calls Climate Change ‘World's Most Fearsome’ Weapon Of Mass Destruction appeared first on ThinkProgress.

[Return to Top](#)

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Kerry's Jakarta climate speech, the first in a series on the urgency of action, would appear to be utterly irreconcilable with a decision to construct the Keystone XL pipeline, a decision that rests almost entirely on Kerry's shoulders. Kerry explained:

When 97 percent of scientists agree on anything, we need to listen, and we need to respond.

Well, 97 percent of climate scientists have confirmed that climate change is happening and that human activity is responsible. These scientists agree on the causes of these changes and they agree on the potential effects. They agree that the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide contributes heavily to climate change. They agree that the energy sources that we've relied on for decades to fuel our cars and to heat our homes or to air condition our homes, to — all the things that provide us electricity like oil and coal — that these are largely responsible for sending those greenhouse gases up into the atmosphere...

And they agree that, if we continue to go down the same path that we are going down today, the world as we know it will change — and it will change dramatically for the worse.

You can watch the whole speech here:

Sunday's speech is utterly at odds with State's logic-twisting Keystone-friendly Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. For instance, Kerry says:

One of the arguments that we do hear is that it's going to be too expensive to be able to address climate change. I have to tell you, that assertion could not be less grounded in fact. In fact, it's exactly the opposite. Serious analysts understand that the costs of doing nothing far outweigh the costs of investing in solutions now. You do not need a degree in economics or a graduate degree in business in order to understand that the cost of flooding, the cost of drought, the cost of famine, the cost of health care, the cost of addressing this challenge is simply far less — the costs of addressing this challenge are far less than the costs of doing nothing.

Well, since the costs of addressing climate change “are far less” than the cost of inaction — and since fossil fuel combustion is the primary cause of climate change — it seems pretty self-evident that the cheapest climate strategy is to leave the dirtiest pools of carbon in the ground. And there aren't many bigger, dirtier pools of carbon than the Canadian tar sands.

“We can make good on the moral responsibility we all have to leave future generations with a planet that is clean and healthy and sustainable for the future,” Kerry told the audience in Indonesia. “You have a saying, I think, here in Indonesia, ‘Luka di kaki, sakit seluruh badan’... it means ‘when there's a pain in the foot, the whole body feels it,’” he continued. “Well, today in this interconnected world that we all live in, the fact is that hardship anywhere is actually felt by people everywhere. We all see it; we share it.” Well, Keystone is more than a pain in the foot.

I'm not sure if Kerry has thought through the international implications of approving Keystone, as I pointed out last year. The United States has already undermined its standing to cajole other countries into climate commitments by expanding oil and gas drilling as well as coal exports. But none of those were Kerry's decision, whereas Keystone is.

Kerry said in Jakarta that for the problem of WMD, “We all have to approach this challenge together.” Then he added, “The bottom line is this: it is the same thing with climate change. And in a sense, climate change can now be considered another weapon of mass destruction, perhaps the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction.”

Climate change is indeed the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction. And that makes the tar sands a hydrogen bomb, and it makes Keystone a loose nuke delivery system or a poorly guarded WMD. We need to keep the tar sands locked securely under ground where it can't harm our children and future generations.

The U.S. has a serious shot at hitting the 2020 target of a 17 percent cut in CO2 emissions from 2005 levels that Obama made for the 2009 climate talks in Copenhagen — a target embraced in his Climate Action Plan (but utterly ignored by State's EIS). That requires the President to embrace strong emissions reductions from existing coal-fired power plants. But let's not pretend that target is either especially hard to hit or scientifically meaningful (see “Developed Nations Must Cut Emissions In Half By

2020, Says New Study“).

That is to say, the fact Kerry can go to the other big emitters and commit to meeting Obama's pledge is a necessary minimum condition to achieve a climate agreement, but it is not sufficient. He needs some moral standing. He needs to be able to demonstrate to the world the U.S. understands that far deeper cuts are needed post-2020 and that means not sticking new spigots into huge, dirty carbon pools like the tar sands.

Kerry needs to show that his words are more than words, that he actually believes climate change is the most fearsome WMD. Kerry must recommend to Obama that Keystone be killed.

Kerry started as Secretary with clean hands on climate. But approving Keystone would be like dipping his hands into the dirtiest, stickiest tar imaginable — they could never be cleaned again.

[Return to Top](#)

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Fracking Well Blowout Causes Oil And Chemical Wastewater Spill In North Dakota | View Clip

02/17/2014

Think Progress

CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK An oil well owned by Whiting Petroleum Corp. started leaking hydraulic fracturing fluid and spewing oil late on Thursday, after a blowout that company and state officials said may take “a couple more days” to clear up, according to Friday reports in Reuters . The well lost control after a blowout preventer failed, and began leaking between 50 and 70 barrels (2,100 to 2,940 gallons) per day of fracking fluid — a mixture of generally classified chemicals, water, and sand — and 200 barrels (8,400 gallons) per day of oil, the Reuters reports said. As of Friday, fluids from the leak were being collected and trucked from the site. Whiting is maintaining that none of the liquids entered the water, though some oily “mist” did spray onto the frozen creek. “This [leak] is a large one and also a health and human risk, it's a big one,” Lynn Helms, the head of the state's Department of Mineral Resources, said in a conference call. “Pressure and control of a well is essentially priority number one for oil and gas companies.” By Monday, it was unclear if the well had been fixed and if the oil and wastewater had stopped leaking. Calls to both Whiting Petroleum and the North Dakota Mineral Resources Department were not immediately returned. Though the harmful effects of an oil leak are widely known, less is known about the effects of the chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process. Fracking is a method of extracting fossil fuels, coveted for its ability to increase the flow of oil or gas from a well. This is done by injecting high-pressure water and chemicals miles deep into the ground into subsurface rock, effectively “fracturing” the rock and allowing more spaces for oil and gas to come through. The tactic is generally paired with horizontal drilling. The high-pressure water and chemical injections generally result in a good amount of wastewater, which is what Whiting's well is leaking along with oil. The

specific chemical makeup of that water is a large part of why the practice is so controversial, as public disclosure of what exactly is used in the water is largely self-regulated by the fracking companies. Thanks to laws pushed by corporate front groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), states have allowed minimum disclosure of the chemicals used in the fluid. In North Dakota, regulations only require companies to disclosure chemicals that are classified as “hazardous substances” by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. But, as noted by the National Resources Defense Council, OSHA does not classify all dangerous chemicals as hazardous — only those that are shown to be dangerous in the workplace.

February has not been a good month for fossil fuel accidents. On the 13th, a train carrying crude oil from Canada derailed in Pennsylvania, spilling an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 gallons of oil. On the same day, a natural gas pipeline exploded in Kentucky, setting fires and destroying homes. Two days earlier on the 11th, 100,000 gallons of coal slurry spilled into a waterway near Charleston, West Virginia — the latest woe for a state that has been dealing with an unprecedented chemical spill. On that same day, a Chevron natural gas well exploded in Greene County, Pennsylvania. The list goes on. On February 2nd, a stormwater pipe burst under an unlined coal ash pond at a retired coal plant in Eden, North Carolina, draining 82,000 tons of coal ash mixed with 27 million gallons of water into the Dan River — the 3rd largest coal ash spill in U.S.

history. On the 5th, 12,000 gallons of crude oil leaked from a Canadian Pacific Railway train on Monday in Minnesota, dribbling oil along the tracks for 68 miles.

And on the 1st, a train carrying fuel oil, fertilizer, methanol derailed in southeast Mississippi, forcing a local evacuation. The post Fracking Well Blowout Causes Oil And Chemical Wastewater Spill In North Dakota appeared first on ThinkProgress .

[Return to Top](#)

Landowner group files lawsuit against N.Y. governor over fracking | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

NAREIT SmartBrief

The Joint Landowners Coalition of New York has sued Gov. Andrew Cuomo, saying he is overstepping his authority on hydraulic fracturing, which has been blocked in the state since 2008. The group wants Cuomo's administration to speed up the completion of two reviews on fracking, which are being conducted by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health.

Published in Brief

[Return to Top](#)

Bill Nye Criticizes Republican Rep. for Denying Climate Change | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Christian Post - Online, The

Bill Nye, known popularly as “The Science Guy” for his scientific kids show, speaks at The Creation Museum during a debate with Ken Ham Tuesday night.

By Stoyan Zaimov, Christian Post Reporter

Bill Nye "The Science Guy" has criticized Tennessee Republican Rep. Marsha Blackburn for disputing the reality of climate change, insisting that the scientific community accepts it as fact. He also called for legislation to tackle climate change.

"There is no debate in the scientific community. And I encourage the congresswoman to look at the facts," Nye said in a debate on "Meet the Press" Sunday, NBC News reported. "We need you to change things, not to deny what's happening."

Blackburn, who is the vice chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, argued that there is no consensus on the subject.

"Neither he nor I are climate scientists. He's an engineer and actor; I'm a member of Congress," Blackburn said, and noted that regardless of the validity of climate change, lawmakers would still need to consider cost-benefiting solutions before imposing them.

Nye, who earlier this month debated Creation Museum CEO and President Ken Ham on creationism and evolution, warning that the U.S. is in trouble if it teaches creationism to children as science, argued that climate change needs to be tackled immediately.

"It would be everybody's interests to just get going," he said. "The more we mess around with this denial, the less we're going to get done."

The question of climate change remains a controversial topic in American politics.

The Environmental Protection Agency is trying to create rules that would place limits on carbon pollution. Climate change legislation passed by House Democrats in 2009 was stalled since Republicans won control of the house in 2010.

Republicans in Congress are, meanwhile, urging Obama to move forward with the Keystone XL oil pipeline project, though the Obama administration remains concerned over the environmental impact construction will have.

On Monday, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry called climate change one of the world's most serious problems, alongside disease outbreaks, poverty, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

"We should not allow a tiny minority of shoddy scientists and science and extreme ideologues to compete with scientific fact," Kerry said at a speech at the U.S. Embassy's function in Jakarta, Indonesia, CNN reported.

His comments reflect warnings President Obama delivered at his State of the Union address, when he called climate change an undeniable fact.

According to a February 2013 survey by the Pew Research Center, only 40 percent of Americans said climate change was a major threat, and only 34 percent of the public viewed new climate change policies as something that was essential for the White House and Congress to tackle.

[Return to Top](#)

Leak reported at N.D. oil well after blowout preventer fails | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

NAREIT SmartBrief

Date and sources
02/16/2014 | Reuters

Whiting Petroleum on Friday reported a blowout at one of its oil wells in North Dakota, resulting in a leak of hydraulic fracturing chemicals. The company said the well's blowout preventer failed, and 50 to 70 barrels per day of fracking fluid are leaking from the well. Responders are "still diverting what's flowing from the well into storage tanks," said North Dakota Department of Health spokesman Kris Roberts.

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[Return to Top](#)

Landowner group files lawsuit against N.Y. governor to push fracking | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

NAREIT SmartBrief

The Joint Landowners Coalition of New York has sued Gov. Andrew Cuomo, saying he is overstepping his authority on hydraulic fracturing, which has been blocked in the state since 2008. The group wants Cuomo's administration to speed up the completion of two reviews on fracking, which are being conducted by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health. "Since taking office in January 2011, Gov. Cuomo has injected himself in the [fracking review], controlled its progression, and precluded the DEC and Commissioner Martens from independently exercising their discretionary decision-making authority," the group said in its filing.

Published in Brief

[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

WTTG-TV - Online

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) - More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

This is Maddox's new routine three times a week, what she considers a necessary burden to feel safe drinking water, cooking with it and making coffee.

For weeks, government officials have said the running water in nine counties is suitable for all daily needs. But Maddox, like many of the 300,000 residents whose water was contaminated Jan. 9, is not convinced.

She notes that officials waited four to 10 days, depending on the neighborhood, before allowing people to use their water. In the days right after Freedom Industries leaked chemicals into the Elk River in Charleston, officials said the water should be used only for flushing toilets and fighting fires.

Residents have struggled to track, let alone trust, mixed messages and muddled information from government officials and Freedom Industries, the company involved. Despite public pressure, officials have been reluctant to call the water "safe" and have started arguing that the term is subjective. Instead, they use phrases such as "appropriate to use."

"Well, they won't use the word 'safe,'" said Maddox, who lives with her two daughters and two grandsons in Charleston. "But, the water is 'OK.' We don't know that."

Maddox is not alone, as visible signs of doubt about the water are everywhere.

In Charleston, eateries display signs that say, "We're cooking with bottled water." The chemical licorice smell still wafts out of some showers, toilets and taps in homes and businesses. The smell resurfaced in five schools Feb. 5 and 6, and the district temporarily shut them down. In one case, a teacher fainted and went to the hospital.

Hours after two of the schools closed Feb. 5, an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave a broad endorsement of the water, saying everyone, pregnant women included, could use it.

Up to that point, pregnant women had received conflicting guidance. Days after thousands of people were cleared to start drinking from faucets, federal officials advised that pregnant women should consider a different source of water.

The nine-county region was cleared to use the water before Freedom Industries revealed that a second chemical, stripped PPH, was in the tank that spilled.

Crude MCHM, the first chemical discovered in the spill, and stripped PPH, are used to clean coal. Little is known about their toxicity, in the short or long term. Neither is considered hazardous by federal standards. Only a handful of studies exist for crude MCHM, and they were on lab animals.

Today, doctors are still advising some patients, such as people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems, to avoid the water on a case-by-case basis, said Kanawha County Health Officer Dr. Rahul Gupta.

Outside water continues to be brought in by tanker trucks and military vehicles, under orders by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration. The public still demands it, Tomblin said.

"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

Last week, Tomblin changed his mind on in-home water testing, which he and other officials showed little interest in before. The inspections are part of a larger study Tomblin ordered that looks into key details that officials relied upon initially to lift the water-use ban.

Tomblin contracted Dr. Andrew Whelton to lead the study. The researcher, based at the University of South Alabama, came to Charleston to study the spill without outside funding. Then he landed a \$50,000 federal grant studying what the chemicals do to pipes in houses. But he had been seeking online donations for return trips to West Virginia to monitor long-term water quality in homes.

Then Tomblin came calling and provided Whelton \$650,000 from the state. With that money, Whelton will sample water in some homes and continue investigating how the chemical permeates or bonds to pipes. Officials have maintained that the chemical doesn't have the right properties to stick around in piping and resurface later.

Whelton also is studying the odor threshold and threat of the chemical. Government experts have long said people can smell the licorice tinge well after the chemical is no longer dangerous in water or vapor. The smell enveloped the valley for days.

Whelton's team also is tasking experts to investigate the CDC's standard for how much of the chemical can be safely ingested in drinking water.

Tomblin's wide-ranging project would need millions more dollars in federal grants. He's calling for that money and, in an effort to re-instill public confidence, for the research team to be able to maintain independence from government officials.

"It is time to let the political officials step aside and let the scientists come in and do the work we need them to do," Tomblin said.

In a region nicknamed "Chemical Valley" because of the industry's huge footprint in greater Charleston, even residents who have lived here their entire lives are concerned.

At a legislative public meeting two weeks ago, several people said they're considering moving. Before the spill, people were already leaving West Virginia at one of the highest rates in the country.

Sue Davis has lived in Kanawha County for 71 years. She vowed that her faith in the water would never return. She said trusting the authorities won't make the potential risks any less threatening.

"I think (people) are deceiving themselves," Davis said.

Each rash, itch, dry patch of skin or dizzy spell lends doubt for people who shower or brush their teeth in the water. Gupta, the health official, said long-term monitoring is needed to track health conditions that could develop much later because little is known about the chemical's long-term effects.

"People are as angry and as frustrated as they were in the first few days," Gupta said. "It's been a challenge. We are on frontiers unknown. And, the population - the 300,000 people or so - continue to suffer."

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[Return to Top](#)

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

WTTG-TV - Online

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) - North Carolina's top environmental official says he briefed Gov. Pat McCrory about filing a lawsuit against Duke Energy that resulted in a proposed settlement fining the \$50 billion corporation \$99,000 to resolve violations for pollution leaching from two huge coal ash dumps.

State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers at an oversight hearing Monday that the Republican governor's only directions were to protect the environment and do the right thing.

The state agency put its deal with Duke on hold following a massive Feb. 2 spill into

the Dan River.

McCrory worked for Duke for 28 years before running for governor in 2008. Environmentalists criticized the proposed settlement with modest fines as a sweetheart deal to the nation's largest electricity provider.

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[Return to Top](#)

Obama to meet with Canadian PM Harper as pressure mounts around Keystone XL | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
RawStory.com

18:10 EST

When Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper visits Mexico this week for a summit of North American leaders, one of his key objectives will be to push for US approval of a controversial oil pipeline.

The Keystone XL project — first proposed back in 2008 — would bring crude from Canada's oil sands in Alberta across the US Midwest to Texas, via a pipeline stretching 1,179 miles (1,897 kilometers).

The project has pitted environmental groups against the oil industry, which has argued that it will bring much-needed jobs to the United States and help fulfill the US goal of energy self-sufficiency.

It also has caused strains in relations between Ottawa and Washington. The United States has to approve some 875 miles of the new route.

Harper's meeting with US President Barack Obama on Wednesday in the Mexican city of Toluca will be their first face-to-face talks since September, at a summit in Russia.

The Canadian prime minister — who will be accompanied by his trade, natural resources and public safety ministers — has said the Keystone XL pipeline is crucial for his country's economic prosperity.

And he has expressed deep frustration that six years after it was first proposed, oil giant TransCanada's US\$5.3 billion project remains in limbo.

“Of course, Harper will be tempted to pressure Obama,” Pierre-Oliver Pineau, a professor in energy sector management at HEC Montreal business school, told AFP.

But he is unlikely to quickly sway the US leader, who faces opposition from environmentalists within his Democratic party. The United States has also increased its own oil production, making supplies from Canada less vital.

- Pipe dreams -

When Obama, Harper and Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto meet in Toluca, energy and the environment will be on the shared agenda, but the future of the Keystone project is paramount for Canada, America's neighbor and largest trading partner.

Last month, the US State Department issued a long-awaited review of the project, saying it would have little impact on climate change or the environment. But the report stopped short of making a recommendation.

Canada — which currently ships nearly all of its oil to the United States — sees US hesitation on Keystone as abandoning a longstanding energy relationship that has given Ottawa preferred market access.

Harper took a shot across the bow in January 2012, vowing to seek out new markets for Canadian oil, and stressed this new “key priority” during a visit to Beijing the following month.

Harper has signalled he is willing to give Obama some political cover by matching regulations to curb climate change, but he said Canada will not move unilaterally to cut carbon emissions.

Harper's Conservative government, meanwhile, has been openly working with US Republicans in Congress to up the pressure on Obama.

US House Speaker John Boehner, who claims Keystone would create some 100,000 American jobs, said allowing the decision to languish was “economic malpractice.”

- Decision expected soon -

Obama is expected to announce a decision on Keystone in the coming months.

Harper has said a nod for the pipeline is inevitable, and recently told a US audience he “won't take no for an answer.”

But Jim Prentice, a former Canadian industry and environmental minister seen as a potential successor to Harper, said approval might have to wait until after Obama leaves office.

He added that Canada must have secured access to new markets with the construction of a separate pipeline from Alberta to the Pacific Coast by then.

That project, as well as a pan-Canadian pipeline to the Atlantic Coast, were proposed after the initial Keystone delays, and are awaiting government approval.

“We need to be a forceful partner with alternative (markets), so that we're not dependent and supplicant to a US marketplace that is over-supplied,” Prentice recently told the Economic Club of Canada.

Waiting for the next administration, however, may not yield any better results for Canada.

“The next administration may not be any more supportive as the internal political dynamics are unlikely to change. If Hillary Clinton becomes the next US president, the situation (for Canada) won't improve,” Pineau said.

Going forward, much more fundamental changes are shaping the bilateral energy relationship.

The United States is tapping energy in the ground and offshore thanks to new fracking and drilling technologies, and this is fueling significant production that could put it in competition with Canada for overseas customers.

[Image via Agence France-Presse]

Agence France-Presse

AFP journalists cover wars, conflicts, politics, science, health, the environment, technology, fashion, entertainment, the offbeat, sports and a whole lot more in text, photographs, video, graphics and online.

[Return to Top](#)

Fracking Well Blowout Causes Oil And Chemical Wastewater Spill In North Dakota | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Think Progress

"Fracking Well Blowout Causes Oil And Chemical Wastewater Spill In North Dakota"

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day of oil, the Reuters reports said. As of Friday, fluids from the leak were being collected and trucked from the site. Whiting is maintaining that none of the liquids entered the water, though some oily “mist” did spray onto the frozen creek.

“This [leak] is a large one and also a health and human risk, it's a big one,” Lynn Helms, the head of the state's Department of Mineral Resources, said in a conference call.

“Pressure and control of a well is essentially priority number one for oil and gas companies.”

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Though the harmful effects of an oil leak are widely known, less is known about the effects of the chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process. Fracking is a method of extracting fossil fuels, coveted for its ability to increase the flow of oil or gas from a well. This is done by injecting high-pressure water and chemicals miles deep into the ground into subsurface rock, effectively “fracturing” the rock and allowing more spaces for oil and gas to come through. The tactic is generally paired with horizontal drilling.

The high-pressure water and chemical injections generally result in a good amount of wastewater, which is what Whiting's well is leaking along with oil. The specific chemical makeup of that water is a large part of why the practice is so controversial, as public disclosure of what exactly is used in the water is largely self-regulated by the fracking companies. Thanks to laws pushed by corporate front groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), states have allowed minimum disclosure of the chemicals used in the fluid.

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The list goes on. On February 2nd, a stormwater pipe burst under an unlined coal ash pond at a retired coal plant in Eden, North Carolina, draining 82,000 tons of coal ash mixed with 27 million gallons of water into the Dan River — the 3rd largest coal ash spill in U.S. history. On the 5th, 12,000 gallons of crude oil leaked from a Canadian Pacific Railway train on Monday in Minnesota, dribbling oil along the tracks for 68 miles. And on the 1st, a train carrying fuel oil, fertilizer, methanol derailed in southeast Mississippi, forcing a local evacuation.

[Return to Top](#)

xkcd's "Frequency" Will Make You Feel How Fast the Earth Is Moving | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Smithsonian - Online

How long do you need to watch to see a magnitude 4 earthquake?

Randall Munroe, the man behind the webcomic xkcd, has a knack for putting big concepts (money, depth, the ocean bottom, time and space) into context. In his latest, "Frequency" (reproduced above), Munroe takes abstract-seeming ideas—like "five babies born every second"—puts these recurring frequencies side-by-side and manages to make those dry factoids visceral.

Look—babies are being born on this planet faster than your heart is beating.

Or, look, there's an earthquake. And there's another, the lurching motion of a slipping fault. Earthquakes are incredibly common, but most are too small and weak to feel. Every three beats of your heart, roughly, an earthquake is happening somewhere on the planet. (Which makes those tiny earthquakes induced by fracking or Seattle Seahawks fans seem slightly less impressive.)

But there's one entry on Monroe's chart that never seems to blip: "Earthquake (Magnitude 4)." That got us wondering: how long would you need to wait to see it flash?

According to the United States Geological Survey, there are roughly 13,000 earthquakes each year with a magnitude from 4.0 to 4.9. In fact, a magnitude 4.1 quake hit South Carolina just this past weekend. At 13,000 quakes and 525,960 minutes in a year, you'd need to sit around for around 40 minutes to see the Earthquake (Magnitude 4) box flash.

Monroe's chart does a couple of things really well: it puts events in relation to one another—heartbeats to marriages, births to deaths—but it also helps explain more esoteric events. Sharks are plucked from the ocean with surprising frequency. Earthquakes are incredibly common.

Tags Cool Finds

About Colin Schultz

Colin Schultz is a freelance science writer and editor based in Toronto, Canada. He blogs for Smart News and contributes to the American Geophysical Union. He has a B.Sc. in physical science and philosophy, and a M.A. in journalism.

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We Recommend

Scientists are researching how the rodent can become less susceptible to its feline foe.

[Return to Top](#)

Twin Disasters Helped Hone Energy Expert | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

National Journal - Online

Two disasters served as bookends for the Capitol Hill career of Tom Michels in the office of Sen. Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. The 39-year-old energy expert joined Landrieu's staff not long after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, and he left to join Shell Oil just as BP's gushing oil well in the Gulf of Mexico was capped in 2010.

"The challenges were really pronounced," Michels said Friday as he packed his bags at Shell to move to the energy consulting firm BlueWater Strategies. "At the same time it was an opportunity to try new things" as the federal and state governments scrambled to respond to the dual catastrophes.

Of course, it wasn't disaster relief that attracted Michels to work for Landrieu, a Democrat who just last week of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Michels connected with Landrieu while he was director of public affairs for the National Ocean Industries Association, a trade group for offshore energy producers—and providers of the lifeblood of Louisiana's economy.

Michels grew up in Cheverly, Md., and was educated just north of Capitol Hill at Gonzaga High School before heading to La Salle University in Philadelphia. His first job out of college was back in Washington with an association for public transit agencies. He moved on to NOIA in 2000.

After earning a master's degree in international relations at the University of Chicago, Michels returned to his home turf and landed a job with Landrieu as principal policy adviser for energy, environment, agriculture, and related appropriations. He became the

senator's legislative director in 2009.

"I came to love the oil and gas business," Michels said. That passion led him to a lobbying position with Shell in October 2010. As the energy giant's senior adviser for government relations in Washington, Michels has focused on "downstream issues" for all of Shell's businesses—oil, natural gas, chemicals, pipelines, shipping, and trading—and more recently on what the company calls unconventional oil and gas development, better known as fracking.

His move to Bluewater Strategies was prompted by the opportunity to work with an old friend and colleague, McKie Campbell, who joined the firm last year after serving as a top aide to Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, and as Republican staff director to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

"It's a culmination of my past lives," Michels said. With a background in a trade association, the federal government, and the private sector, Michels said he is well positioned to offer "a lot of strategic advice to companies in the energy realm."

This article appears in the .

[Return to Top](#)

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Washington Examiner - Online

AP Staff Writer • | FEBRUARY 17, 2014 AT 9:00 PM

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina's top environmental official said Monday that he briefed Gov. Pat McCrory before intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,111 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps.

Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included no requirement to force the nation's largest electricity provider to actually clean up its pollution.

The state has now put its proposed settlement on hold following the massive Feb. 2 spill triggered by a pipe collapse at one of Duke's coal ash dumps adjacent to the Dan River, which turned cloudy and gray for miles.

State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers at an oversight hearing that he spoke with the governor before his agency used its regulatory authority to intervene in lawsuits filed by a coalition of

environmental groups under the federal Clean Water Act.

"When I went to brief Gov. McCrory about the initiation of those suits, he said two things," Skvarla recounted. "He said protect the environment, and do the right thing."

But Skvarla maintains he never told McCrory, a Republican who worked for Duke for 28 years, about the proposed terms of the settlement negotiated by his agency.

The citizens groups that originally tried to sue Duke opposed the state's deal, saying it shielded the company from far harsher penalties it might have faced in federal court had the state not intervened.

Skvarla bristled at coverage of the issue by The Associated Press and other news media outlets for suggesting his agency's intervention "blocked" the environmental groups from holding Duke accountable. He said those advocates are still free to voice their concerns in court, if a judge allows.

Skvarla, who previously declined an interview request from The AP, complained that reporters contacting his agency for comment weren't interested in getting "the rest of the story."

"Nobody has called and asked sufficient questions," Skvarla lamented. "There were lots of calls, but all they were asking for was quotes."

Skvarla declined to say what he considers sufficient questions or why he feels his agency, which has issued numerous news releases in the two weeks since the spill, is unable to convey its perspective to the public.

Asked if he thought a \$99,111 fine with no requirement that Duke clean up its coal ash dumps was a settlement in the best interests of the people of North Carolina, Skvarla suggested the now-scuttled deal was better than getting caught in a protracted legal fight against the energy giant.

"We are not dictators, we are not pharaohs," said Skvarla, who questioned whether Duke would have ever agreed to tougher terms.

Federal prosecutors served Skvarla's agency and Duke Energy with grand jury subpoenas demanding records as part of a federal investigation into the spill, which contaminated the river so badly public health officials advised against prolonged contact with the water or eating fish.

The state announced Monday that it will begin testing for contaminants in John H. Kerr Reservoir in Virginia, roughly 80 miles downstream from the spill site, after a sheen of gray ash was seen on the surface.

McCrory has maintained close ties to Duke since leaving the company to launch his

first campaign for governor in 2008.

Campaign finance reports show Duke Energy, its political action committee, executives and their immediate families have donated at least \$1.1 million to McCrory's campaign and affiliated groups that spent money on TV ads, mailings and events to support him.

After becoming governor on his second try in 2012, McCrory gained authority to make numerous decisions that could affect Duke's bottom line, including making appointments at the state commission that approves utility rates.

On a state ethics form last year, the governor indicated that his investment portfolio includes holdings of Duke stock valued in excess of \$10,000, though he is under no legal obligation to disclose the specific amount and refused to do so as recently as last week.

McCrory has said he sees no conflict of interest in his role as elected official and corporate shareholder.

George Everett, Duke's director of environmental and legislative affairs, told state lawmakers Monday that the company is sorry about the spill and will be accountable for the cleanup. But beyond scooping out a big pile of coal ash from the Dan at its plant, it is unclear how the tens of thousands of tons of toxic material can be removed now that it has settled to the bottom of the river for miles downstream.

Tom Reeder, the state's director of water quality, said testing shows the levels of arsenic, lead and other contaminants that spiked in the immediate wake of the spill are returning to levels considered safe for humans. However he conceded it may be too late for some aquatic species living in the river and worried about the long-term effects of the coal ash in the Dan.

"If you're a mollusk and covered with ash then, yeah, you're gonna die," Reeder said.

Follow Associated Press reporter Michael Biesecker at [Twitter.com/mbieseck](https://twitter.com/mbieseck)

Web URL: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/article/2119078>

[Return to Top](#)

Jim Hillibish: A Midge was the sweetest car on Earth - when it ran | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Sussex Countian - Online

I spotted a '72 MG Midget recently. My hand reached for my headlight flasher. Old MG pilots die hard. Flashing lights was the international symbol of brotherhood among

MG drivers. After I bought a new '72, I learned flashing was a symbol of pity. The Midge was all cherried up. I imagine the driver bought a derelict in a barn for \$100 and dumped 20 grand into the resurrection. When I found true love for \$1,600 in 1972 at Checkered Flag Sports Cars, the salesman asked if I was handy with garage tools. "She takes a little work," he said. Imagine trying to sell a car that way today. My Morris Group Midget was in a line of diminutive British cars with "little" names: the Morris Minor and the lately reprised Mini Cooper. I loved my Midget, but... It was the smallest vehicle this side of bicycles. The contortionist cockpit felt like you were sitting below the roadway. Bus axles were above eye level. Tractor-trailer rigs could pass over the car, taking off the windscreen but nothing else, if you ducked. Despite this, the Midget was one cool roadster. The high-rev gearbox, when the clutch wasn't slipping, was pure joy. Fourth rocketed you to 80. Speeding tickets barely fit in the glove box. The two-seater Midget began in the 1920s on a Morris Minor frame. It always was a borrowed car. In '61, the Austin-Healy Sprite MK II, another "baby" car, was rebadged as the new Midget. In '65, the Midge received a motor from the Cooper. It looked like a sewing machine. My '72 was a keeper. It was the last Midget with thin, useless chrome bumpers. Soon, import versions arrived with ugly, thick-rubber bangers, a futile attempt to meet U.S. crash standards. The Midget died in '79, not enough room under the bonnet for air-pollution gear. Midgets needed three little wipers. The windshield was too small for two standard ones. When I ran out of small talk on dates, I turned on the trio. They entranced women. Still, the roof leaked even in drizzly weather. My Midge took constant tweaking. As with most British cars, the electrical system was iffy. On foggy days, the spark plugs fouled. You pulled and wiped before starting. High-torque revving busted the clutch. The starter went. The radio was useless (not enough punch to overcome the engine "voice"). The car was so light, two guys could pick it up. There was so much torque on the rear wheels, they spun out on snow. I cried when I sold it. It fetched \$2,800 from a collector, the only time I ever made money on a car. When I saw that Midge, I forgot its testy travails. All I remember is top-down country roads at 70 mph, downshifting and groovin' the "rummm, rummm, rummm" of the world's sweetest gearbox. The driver flashed me back and waved as my memories spun out of control. Page 2 of 2 - Reach Jim at 330-580-8324 or jim.hillibish@cantonrep.com. On Twitter: @jhillibishREP.

[Return to Top](#)

Seaford embraces role in former slave's escape to freedom | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

News Journal - Online

— It was, by most accounts, one of Harriet Tubman's most risky and daring trips on the Underground Railroad — a journey where she traveled south to get north, avoided capture by slave traders, and used multiple modes of transportation.

And it is the story that puts Seaford, a city with a long-conflicted history regarding slavery, in the center of the Underground Railroad and gives it a place on the National

Parks Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

“This is a huge deal for the City of Seaford,” said Acting Mayor David Genshaw, of the “incredible” story of Tubman and Tilly's escape through Seaford.

No one suspected that Seaford had once played a role in the Underground Railroad – a network of people and safe houses – that slaves used to get from bondage to freedom, until Seaford resident Jim Blackwell started pulling together existing research, networked with experts, and looked for primary source documents to submit to the National Parks Service.

Seaford's history with slavery has always been complicated.

Just before the Civil War, there were dozens of slave owners in Seaford, including former Delaware Gov. William Ross. Ross was a wanted man during the Civil War escaping arrest by fleeing to Europe.

Blackwell started his research to develop a comprehensive exhibit for the Seaford museum that shared what slavery was like in the area – featuring information on notorious slave trader Patty Cannon and a wanted sign with names and rewards for escaped slaves.

Meanwhile, other local and regional historians were working on the story of Tilly. Blackwell connected with them and they pieced together a love story – about one slave who had escaped to freedom in Canada while leaving his fiance, Tilly, behind. He would send for Tilly, ultimately enlisting Tubman to help bring her to freedom.

It is Tilly's story with the help of Tubman and Thomas Garrett, that put Seaford on the Network to Freedom map.

On Monday, local residents and officials gathered at Seaford's Gateway Park – the former site of the hotel where Tilly and Tubman spent the night– and unveiled a historic marker that tells a condensed version of the story. (Page 2 of 2) “They were nearly arrested,” said Blackwell.

Blackwell believes Tilly was enslaved in Maryland at the time of her escape because on Oct. 21, 1856, the sidewheeler steamboat Kent left Baltimore heading south down the Chesapeake Bay into the Nanticoke River and up to Seaford.

The likely reason for heading south was to avoid the \$500 bond – a guarantee that they weren't escaped slaves – that each of the black women would have had to pay to go north Blackwell said.

Blackwell said that historical records show just one steamboat left Baltimore each week for Seaford – on Tuesdays.

On the 40-mile trip south, Tubman secured a letter of passage from the captain stating that she and Tilly were not slaves. Blackwell suggested that Tubman was able to get the letter from the Baltimore captain because she had a similar letter from a steamboat captain in Philadelphia identifying her as “a free black woman from Philadelphia.” That letter allowed her to travel south. The two captains knew each other, Blackwell said.

The two women disembarked at Seaford, walked up a hill to a hotel and wrote abolitionist Thomas Garrett: “When the boat arrived at Seaford, she [Tubman] boldly went to the hotel and called for supper and lodging,” Blackwell said.

The following morning, slave dealers tried to arrest the two women but the innkeeper intervened, Blackwell said.

From there, the two women walked to Bridgeville, boarded a train to Camden and were then helped on to Garrett's home in Wilmington.

It is through historic records and Garrett's letters that historians were able to connect the dots in the Tilly escape.

“It was a dangerous area because local slave traders would have known a stranger,” Blackwell said, explaining the risk.

As the marker was dedicated on Monday, Seaford City Councilwoman Pat Jones spoke of the humbling experience of standing there.

“I'm standing on ground that Harriet Tubman stood on. Harriet Tubman and Pat Jones have a lot in common. We are both African-American women who wanted to make a difference.”

State Rep. Dan Short, a former mayor and city councilman, said Tubman and Tilly really did risk everything to escape slavery.

“It was not an easy time and it was not a safe time,” Short, R-Seaford, said. Page
Previous 1 2 Next

[Return to Top](#)

The chicken tax hits the fan [Editorial] | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Baltimore Sun - Online

On average, about 2,600 bills are introduced during a 90-day General Assembly session, so governors rarely have much to say about 99 percent of them, at least not until they've at least had a public hearing or perhaps even a committee vote. But that

wasn't the case with Senate Bill 725, which apparently is so distasteful that Gov. Martin O'Malley promised to veto it within days of its mere introduction in Annapolis.

Not only did he threaten to veto it, but Mr. O'Malley even publicly used that phrase offered by President George H. W. Bush to "read my lips" that he wouldn't approve the new tax (apparently ignoring the irony of a Democratic governor quoting a Republican president on a promise he so infamously reversed course on).

What tax could be so horrible to a governor who has raised his share of them? Mr. O'Malley was lashing out against the "Poultry Fair Share Act," a proposed 5-cent-per-bird wholesale tax offered by Sen. Richard S. Madaleno Jr., a Montgomery County Democrat. The tax would raise an estimated \$15 million annually, and the money would be used entirely to finance cover crops on farm land where chicken manure is applied.

Now, let's make something clear: We don't know if such a tax is a good idea or a bad idea. We do know that poultry waste is an enormous problem in this state because of the harm it does when it runs off land and into streams, rivers and eventually, the Chesapeake Bay. It's a major source of nitrogen and phosphorus, particularly in Eastern Shore tributaries.

But we are also sympathetic to the argument that such a tax may not be the best solution for the problem. It could, for instance, discourage poultry companies and cost jobs. And the stakes are pretty high in that regard: The industry estimates there are 15,000 poultry-related jobs on the Delmarva peninsula. Raising the cost of growing chickens in Maryland is bound to have some adverse consequences in such a price-sensitive business.

It's also clear that the O'Malley administration recognizes the poultry manure problem and has pushed not only for greater funding of cover crops and for regulations addressing excess phosphorus on crop land, the manure-related nutrient that is most likely to accumulate in the soil. That latter effort has not always endeared the governor to the farm community, nor has his unwavering support of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, the so-called pollution diet enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Yet the problem with these laudable pollution-fighting efforts is that they tend to impose a burden on farmers but not on the big poultry companies. That's what makes Mr. Madaleno's bill somewhat intriguing it might actually charge the deep-pocketed polluter to the benefit of the little-guy grower who gets stuck with most of the burden of poultry waste.

Given the importance of protecting the Chesapeake Bay and given the complexity of the problem why would a governor threaten to veto the bill before it's even been heard? Incidentally, Mr. O'Malley's threat was first voiced at the annual "Taste of Maryland" dinner honoring farmers six days after the bill was submitted and 19 days before its first hearing in the Senate. The sponsor of a House version of the bill has already

indicated he will withdraw it.

We reject the argument offered by some that even discussing a tax threatens the industry. Such a chill on free speech ought to be regarded as unacceptable. And we would further point out that cover crops are now financed by fees on sewage plants and septic systems and other broad levies, so ordinary taxpayers have a dog in this particular hunt, too.

Could it be the governor is attempting to woo farmers in advance of the Iowa presidential primary in 2016? That's a suggestion made last week by Food & Water Watch, the non-profit advocacy group that has battled the poultry industry before (and criticized Mr. O'Malley's opposition to a anti-pollution lawsuit brought against an Eastern Shore chicken farming couple as well as his ties to Salisbury-based Perdue Farms).

Whether it is or isn't about politics, we agree with environmentalists in this regard the bill ought to be heard. That it has little chance of passing, let alone enactment, given the veto threat, is immaterial. The day lawmakers can't even explore how to help the Chesapeake Bay is the day we know all hope for cleanup efforts is truly lost and it doesn't bode especially well for the alleged independence of the Democratically-controlled state legislature either.

[Return to Top](#)

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Baltimore Sun - Online

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[Return to Top](#)

Schuh pushes to exempt Arundel from stormwater fees | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Baltimore Sun - Online

Drama over stormwater fees continues in Anne Arundel County, where a proposal by Del. Steve Schuh to exempt the county from the fees was met with resistance from fellow delegates last week.

Schuh's bill would remove Anne Arundel from the list of 10 jurisdictions that are required to collect a fee from property owners to help pay for projects that reduce polluted stormwater runoff that harms the Chesapeake Bay.

Schuh, a Gibson Island Republican, voted for the state bill requiring the fees in 2012. He said, however, that Anne Arundel's fees are too high. Plus, he said, Anne Arundel already was spending money on stormwater fixes, so it didn't need a nudge from the state in the form of a fee.

"The state mandate was really less applicable to Anne Arundel County," Schuh said during the weekly meeting of Anne Arundel's delegates on Friday.

But Del. Pamela G. Beidle, a Linthicum Democrat, pointed out that Anne Arundel has \$1 billion worth of stormwater projects that are needed. She said if the money doesn't come from the stormwater fee, then the county would have to make cuts elsewhere, such as building schools or hiring police officers and firefighters.

She acknowledged the fees may be high, but she added: "I think eliminating is a little overboard."

Schuh said that with an improving economy, more tax revenue is flowing into the county, so there's enough money to go around.

Schuh said the overall increase in revenue also could allow the county to cut the property tax to offset the stormwater fees a separate proposal he's pushing.

Schuh had support from some Republicans who expressed concern about how the fees

are affecting homeowners and businesses.

House Speaker Michael E. Busch, an Annapolis Democrat, said the county council could reduce the stormwater fees if it wanted to.

"This is in the purview of the county. They can make any adjustments they want," he said.

Schuh and County Executive Laura Neuman have tangled over stormwater fees in recent weeks as they campaign to win the Republican Party nomination for county executive.

Neuman's lobbyists, Don Murphy and Barbara Wilkens, said they were not prepared to discuss Schuh's bill because it was not on the agenda distributed before the meeting.

Murphy noted, however, that Neuman has expressed support for a statewide repeal of the fees and vetoed the fees passed by the county council last year. The council overrode her veto, establishing fees that range from \$34 to \$170 per year for homeowners.

"Her veto speaks for itself," Murphy said.

As a practical matter, Murphy said that even if Anne Arundel is no longer required to have a fee, the county council likely won't eliminate the fee.

"There's not much chance this is going to go away under this council," he said.

[Return to Top](#)

Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
WMDT-TV - Online

SOURCE Trans Energy, Inc.

ST. MARYS, W.Va.

The Trans Energy management team will also be available on Tuesday, February 18

Additional information regarding Trans Energy, including maps, investor presentations, news releases and videos can be found at the Company's new website www.transenergyinc.com. Trans Energy will regularly update information on the website to provide investors with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations.

About Trans Energy, Inc.

Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale

Forward-looking statements in this release do not constitute guarantees of future performance. □ Such forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause our actual results to differ materially from those anticipated. □

Forward-looking statements in this document include statements regarding the

Company's exploration, drilling and development plans and the Company's expectations regarding the timing and success of such programs. □ Factors that could cause or contribute to such differences include, but are not limited to, fluctuations in the prices of oil and gas, uncertainties inherent in estimating quantities of oil and gas reserves and projecting future rates of production and timing of development activities, competition, operating risks, acquisition risks, liquidity and capital requirements, the effects of governmental regulation, adverse changes in the market for the Company's oil and gas production, dependence upon third-party vendors, and other risks detailed in the Company's periodic report filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

□ For a more detailed discussion of the risks and uncertainties of our business, please refer to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012 filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We assume no obligation to update any forward-looking information contained in this press release or with respect to the announcements described herein.

Company contact: Steve Lucado

[Return to Top](#)

Iran battles pollution with 'clean petrol'-- reports | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Jordan Times - Washington D.C. Bureau - Online

TEHRAN Iran is turning to environmentally friendly Euro-4 emissions standard petrol in major cities to battle worsening air pollution which claims thousands of lives every year, media reports said Monday. Some eight million litres of clean gasoline was distributed to 90 gas stations in Tehran on Saturday, the Ettelaat daily reported Morteza Abedini, head of Tehrans Oil Products Distribution Company, as saying. In order to reduce environmental pollution... all petrol stations are expected to distribute clean gasoline by February 20, he said. Pollution is a constant woe for Tehrans more than eight million residents.

It is caused by bumper-to-bumper traffic and the city's location between two mountains, ensuring that fumes from both cars and factories blanket the city.

Since the last Iranian year began in March 2013, residents have endured polluted air

for 143 days, media reports said.

The poor air quality is made worse by reliance on domestic production of lower quality and therefore more polluting petrol, blamed on Western sanctions against Iran's fuel imports. Daily petrol consumption in Tehran is around nine million litres, according to official figures.

Iran currently produces 16 million litres of Euro-4 gasoline daily.

Euro-4 fuel has also been distributed in other major cities including Karaj west of Tehran and in the central province of Arak.

Other major cities such as Mashhad, Isfahan and Tabriz also suffer from air pollution caused by lower emissions standard Euro-2 fuel.

In 2012, air pollution contributed to nearly 4,400 premature deaths in Tehran alone and nearly 80,000 nationwide, according to health ministry figures.

[Return to Top](#)

Congregations, nonprofits work to address stormwater pollution | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

Once, when heavy rain hit the roof of the Maryland Presbyterian Church in Towson, there was so much runoff that it would wash away the wood chips and soil that cover the children's play area.

Today, the church on Providence Road uses rain barrels and a rain garden to help filter the water — and reduce the polluted runoff that eventually makes its way to the Chesapeake Bay.

Maryland Presbyterian is one of many religious and nonprofit groups in Maryland that are trying to address that pollution, an effort that has grown more urgent now that they must pay the state's new stormwater management fee. The church's fee — dubbed "the rain tax" by critics — comes to about \$1,000 a year.

Bill Breakey, a member of the Maryland Presbyterian's environmental stewardship action group, called the fee "a slight burden, but ... a burden worth bearing, we think."

The church built its stormwater management features before the fees took effect. But for many congregations, pollution became pressing with the enactment of the fees last

year.

Local governments have devised programs to aid churches, and grants are available help faith-based organizations manage their stormwater by installing filtration systems and planting rain gardens.

"Most nonprofits, certainly most churches, are dealing with declining revenue and rising expenses," said the Rev. Mary Gaut, pastor of Maryland Presbyterian. "I think a lot of churches are not aware of these funding sources."

Most counties calculate the state-mandated fee owed by an institution at least in part by measuring the amount of impervious surface on its property. Many religious congregations and some charity groups have been hit especially hard because they have large parking lots.

"With the stormwater fees landing squarely on the back door of the faith community, it has become a very highlighted issue that congregations want to understand," said Jodi Rose, executive director of Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, which recently organized a resource fair to educate religious organizations about polluted runoff.

"They want to be able to pay their fees, but they also are struggling with their own budgets."

A state law passed in 2012 requires Baltimore and Maryland's nine other largest jurisdictions to collect the fee from property owners every year. Each local government was left to devise its own fee structure.

In Baltimore County, officials recently announced a \$3 million fund to help nonprofits remove impervious surfaces from their properties.

"We get a reduction in our pollutant load, and the nonprofit gets a reduction in their stormwater fee," said Vince Gardina, director of the county's Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability.

Prince George's County launched an incentive program to encourage nonprofits to reduce runoff.

Prince George's reduces fees for nonprofits that let the county build rain gardens or that start a "green team or ministry" that educates members on environmental issues and coordinates tree planting and trash pick-ups.

Organizations that take these steps can end up with virtually no fee, said Adam C. Ortiz, the county's director of the Department of Environmental Resources.

Nonprofit and religious organizations in Howard County can get fee waivers if they agree to install stormwater management features.

The environmental group Blue Water Baltimore is offering grants to help places of worship set up rain gardens, redirect downspouts and remove asphalt.

Still, the fees remains a major concern for many congregations. A spokesman for the Archdiocese of Baltimore said many parishes don't have the funds needed to invest in the design, engineering and construction of mitigation systems.

"We have not seen anything specific where there isn't a very substantial up-front investment to save little money," spokesman Sean Caine said in a statement. "Our city parishes and schools cannot afford that."

Caine said churches want to help the environment and that Catholic teaching "clearly states that we all have a duty to care for God's gift of creation." Parishes plan to employ rain barrels and redirect downspouts.

"Unfortunately, while these efforts help to reduce polluted runoff, they do not do much to decrease the high fees being charged by the city," Caine said. "This will force the many parishes and schools operating on shoestring budgets to make tough fiscal decisions regarding things like staffing and the programs and services they offer, many of which benefit those in the wider community."

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[Return to Top](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

This is Maddox's new routine three times a week, what she considers a necessary burden to feel safe drinking water, cooking with it and making coffee.

For weeks, government officials have said the running water in nine counties is suitable for all daily needs. But Maddox, like many of the 300,000 residents whose water was contaminated Jan. 9, is not convinced.

She notes that officials waited four to 10 days, depending on the neighborhood, before allowing people to use their water. In the days right after Freedom Industries leaked chemicals into the Elk River in Charleston, officials said the water should be used only for flushing toilets and fighting fires.

Residents have struggled to track, let alone trust, mixed messages and muddled information from government officials and Freedom Industries, the company involved. Despite public pressure, officials have been reluctant to call the water “safe” and have started arguing that the term is subjective. Instead, they use phrases such as “appropriate to use.”

“Well, they won't use the word ‘safe,’” said Maddox, who lives with her two daughters and two grandsons in Charleston. “But, the water is ‘OK.’ We don't know that.”

Maddox is not alone, as visible signs of doubt about the water are everywhere.

In Charleston, eateries display signs that say, “We're cooking with bottled water.” The chemical licorice smell still wafts out of some showers, toilets and taps in homes and businesses. The smell resurfaced in five schools Feb. 5 and 6, and the district temporarily shut them down. In one case, a teacher fainted and went to the hospital.

Hours after two of the schools closed Feb. 5, an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave a broad endorsement of the water, saying everyone, pregnant women included, could use it.

Up to that point, pregnant women had received conflicting guidance. Days after thousands of people were cleared to start drinking from faucets, federal officials advised that pregnant women should consider a different source of water.

The nine-county region was cleared to use the water before Freedom Industries revealed that a second chemical, stripped PPH, was in the tank that spilled.

Crude MCHM, the first chemical discovered in the spill, and stripped PPH, are used to clean coal. Little is known about their toxicity, in the short or long term. Neither is considered hazardous by federal standards. Only a handful of studies exist for crude MCHM, and they were on lab animals.

Today, doctors are still advising some patients, such as people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems, to avoid the water on a case-by-case basis, said Kanawha County Health Officer Dr. Rahul Gupta.

Outside water continues to be brought in by tanker trucks and military vehicles, under orders by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration. The public still demands it, Tomblin said.

"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

Last week, Tomblin changed his mind on in-home water testing, which he and other officials showed little interest in before. The inspections are part of a larger study Tomblin ordered that looks into key details that officials relied upon initially to lift the water-use ban.

Tomblin contracted Dr. Andrew Whelton to lead the study. The researcher, based at the University of South Alabama, came to Charleston to study the spill without outside funding. Then he landed a \$50,000 federal grant studying what the chemicals do to pipes in houses. But he had been seeking online donations for return trips to West Virginia to monitor long-term water quality in homes.

Then Tomblin came calling and provided Whelton \$650,000 from the state. With that money, Whelton will sample water in some homes and continue investigating how the chemical permeates or bonds to pipes. Officials have maintained that the chemical doesn't have the right properties to stick around in piping and resurface later.

Whelton also is studying the odor threshold and threat of the chemical. Government experts have long said people can smell the licorice tinge well after the chemical is no longer dangerous in water or vapor. The smell enveloped the valley for days.

Whelton's team also is tasking experts to investigate the CDC's standard for how much of the chemical can be safely ingested in drinking water.

Tomblin's wide-ranging project would need millions more dollars in federal grants. He's calling for that money and, in an effort to re-instill public confidence, for the research team to be able to maintain independence from government officials.

“It is time to let the political officials step aside and let the scientists come in and do the work we need them to do,” Tomblin said.

In a region nicknamed “Chemical Valley” because of the industry's huge footprint in greater Charleston, even residents who have lived here their entire lives are concerned.

At a legislative public meeting two weeks ago, several people said they're considering moving. Before the spill, people were already leaving West Virginia at one of the highest rates in the country.

[Return to Top](#)

Ex-Salisbury man kills Florida deputy, then self | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Daily Times - Online, The

Suspect then killed himself, police say

Deputy killed by Salisbury Man: A Florida Deputy Sheriff was killed by a Salisbury man early Monday morning after the deputy confronted Benjamin Edward Holtermann in a gated community outside Orlando.

Written by Staff and Wire Reports

From left, Orange County Sheriff's Deputy Jonathan Scott Pine, Benjamin Holtermann and Erica Pugh.

Jonathan Scott Pine / Orange County Sheriff's Office image

Recent but undated photo of Benjamin Edward Holtermann, 28, of Salisbury, Md. who shot and killed a Orange County Sheriff's Office deputy

ORLANDO, FLA. — A man wanted by Salisbury and Fruitland police killed a Florida sheriff's deputy during a burglary call Monday night before killing himself.

Officials with the Orange County Sheriff's Office in Florida said 34-year-old Deputy Jonathan Scott Pine saw a suspect sitting in a car with a woman late Monday. The suspect started to run and the deputy pursued him. That's when the man fired at the deputy, hitting him.

The suspect kept running and was found dead in a nearby neighborhood. The suspected shooter, 28-year-old Benjamin Holtermann, was found dead at the scene from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to authorities.

Police took into custody Holtermann's 18-year-old girlfriend, Erica Pugh, who they said was with him at the time of the burglary. She was charged with several counts of burglary and grand theft.

The Salisbury Police Department issued a warrant for Holtermann's arrest in September. He faced two theft and two forgery charges.

Police say he stole three checks from his employer, R & L Group, and cashed two for a total of \$1,760, according to court documents. A third check for \$3,200 was stopped after the bank confirmed that it was unauthorized.

Holtermann's last known address at the time was in the 1000 block of Meadow View Drive in Salisbury.

Meanwhile, Fruitland Police Chief Mike Phillips confirmed this afternoon Holtermann was "a subject of interest" in connection with some August burglaries in the Fruitland area.

His criminal history extended across Chesapeake Bay.

He pleaded guilty to robbery charges in Baltimore County Circuit Court in 2009 and was sentenced to seven years in prison. He was recommended to receive substance-abuse treatment. Prosecutors declined to pursue related theft and assault charges at the time, according to online court records.

Holtermann also was wanted in Fairfax County, Va., on four warrants for charges including forgery and identity theft, a police spokeswoman there said.

Capt. Angelo Nieves of the Orange County Sheriff's Office said the fire department "made valiant efforts to save our deputy." But he was pronounced dead at Orlando Regional Medical Center.

Pine was married and had three small children, Sheriff Jerry L. Demings said in a statement. Pine had been with the sheriff's office since 2011.

"The citizens of Orange County lost a true hero who was tragically killed patrolling the streets of our community," the sheriff said.

Demings was out of town on business when the shooting occurred and was returning Tuesday.

Pugh was also wanted by Salisbury police at the time of the Florida shooting. A May 2013 warrant sought her on charges of theft less than \$100, giving a false statement to police and obstructing and hindering, according to online court information.

She was listed as living in Delmar, Md., at the time.

Staff Writer Jeremy Cox contributed to this report.

[Return to Top](#)

Dave Wilson's opinion: Program Open Space funding should be restored | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Daily Times - Online, The

Farmers and other landowners are profoundly disappointed to see that Maryland's proposed 2015 budget eliminates any new funding for Program Open Space.

Since 1969, this program has created state and local parks, preserved irreplaceable rare species, and protected farmland and historic sites.

We have significant need to protect and conserve the lands and waters of the Eastern Shore and Maryland's coastal bays behind Ocean City and Assateague for both present and future generations. The state's tourism trade rests squarely on the back of clean water. And few things protect water quality better than undeveloped land.

Maryland residents pay a half a percent real estate transfer tax specifically to allow landowners to voluntarily protect their land from future development. This year that transfer tax generated about \$156 million dollars, but none of these funds will be applied to their intended purpose of land conservation. This violates the public trust.

Ironically, these draconian cuts to land conservation come after a Maryland State Parks Economic Impact and Visitor Study found that state parks have a \$650 million estimated annual economic benefit to local economies and the state.

For every dollar the state invests, visitors spend \$25.56 locally during their park visits.

These resources, both the parks and tourism revenues, are vital to our region. Likewise, with every development right sold, the state is relieved of the future tax burden of cleaning up pollution caused by septic systems, impervious surfaces and toxins.

While the proposed budget includes some bonds to pay back funds removed in previous years, funding for this program should be restored.

We think that giving farmers and other property owners the option of voluntarily selling development rights is a better way of protecting the environment than regulating them into oblivion.

We hope members of the General Assembly can find a way to restore these funds in this year's budget.

SUN INVESTIGATES Groups target inconsistencies in immigration enforcement | [View Clip](#)

02/16/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

An undocumented immigrant arrested in Prince George's County will spend 48 extra hours in jail at the request of immigration agents regardless of the charge or the person's past criminal record.

But the standard is different just across the line in Washington, D.C., where the city detains immigrants for extra time only if they have been involved in serious crimes.

Advocates for immigrants who are being deported under a federal program called Secure Communities are pressing to change a patchwork of local law enforcement policies across the country. The advocates say the extended detainment can heighten the chance of deportation.

In Maryland, most counties honor requests by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to hold immigrants for additional time beyond when they would ordinarily be eligible for release. That happens even though the requests are not signed by a judge. The state attorney general has concluded they are optional and local taxpayers are not reimbursed for the expense.

"There's a huge number of people who are being locked up who would otherwise be dismissed," said Elizabeth Alex, a lead organizer for the immigrant advocacy group CASA de Maryland.

Under Secure Communities, a high share of immigrants without criminal convictions is being deported from Maryland, according to an analysis of data by . More than 40 percent of the Maryland immigrants deported under the program since 2009 had no prior criminal record, compared with 20 percent nationwide.

Gov. Martin O'Malley, a Democrat, wrote the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on Tuesday to ask why those deportations are taking place under a program designed to catch dangerous criminals. The department has not responded to requests for comment about the letter.

Some advocates believe part of the explanation lies in how the state handles immigration detainees.

Secure Communities provides immigration officials access to fingerprints of people who are arrested, be it for a homicide or driving without a license. The suspect's fingerprints are sent to Homeland Security, which checks a database of people known to be in the country illegally.

If the database finds a match, federal agents ask the local jail to hold the immigrant for 48 hours beyond the time he or she would otherwise be released, so a pickup can be arranged.

What happens at that point depends on the state and sometimes the locality.

Virtually all local jails in Maryland, including the state-run Baltimore City Detention Center, agree to the requests from the federal immigration agency.

"We honor detainees," said Terry Kokolis, superintendent at the Anne Arundel County Department of Detention Facilities. "It's no different if it's from Immigration or it's from the U.S. Marshals. Both are law enforcement entities of the government."

But across the Chesapeake Bay in Talbot County, the director of the Department of Corrections takes a different view. Douglas C. Devenyns said his agency honors the detainees in most cases but he also believes the county has discretion.

In at least one instance involving a mother of five children Devenyns said, he did not further detain the inmate.

"We've reserved the right to determine whether or not we should necessarily honor an ICE detainee," he said.

Unlike warrants, immigration detainees are not signed by judges and meet no standard of probable cause. The state attorney general's office wrote in October that federal rules allow "state and local jurisdictions to exercise discretion when determining how to respond to individual detainees."

Opponents of the practice are concerned that immigrants are being detained and deported for minor offenses. A report by the Maryland chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union in November found 76 percent of immigration detainees in Maryland between 2010 and 2012 were filed against immigrants facing traffic or misdemeanor charges.

The ACLU, CASA and others support legislation in the General Assembly that would limit the circumstances under which local jails could hold an immigrant longer than a nonimmigrant.

The TRUST Act would allow a judge to determine when an immigrant should be released.

O'Malley mentioned the legislation in his letter to the Obama administration.

California and Connecticut have passed similar laws, as have New York City, Washington and Chicago.

In Washington, local law enforcement will hold an immigrant for an additional 24 hours only if the person has been arrested for a serious crime within 10 years of the detainer.

"There is an adverse impact on law enforcement if people have a hesitancy to report crimes," said Paul A. Quander Jr., the city's deputy mayor for public safety and justice. "We wanted to enhance public safety, not detract from it."

Opponents say such detainer legislation ties the hands of local authorities to make decisions in the interest of public safety. In California, the measure was opposed by the association of county sheriffs as well as local prosecutors.

"Our opposition is largely grounded in the idea that you're throwing up a road block to the federal government trying to do its job in enforcing immigration laws," said Sean Hoffman, legislative director for the California District Attorneys Association. "The way it's written you have no options."

It's also not clear that such a law would have a significant impact on the number of noncriminals being deported from Maryland. In Washington, 36 percent of immigrants deported under Secure Communities have no criminal record a rate higher than the national average.

The Maryland bill is set for hearings in March. State Sen. Brian Frosh, who chairs the Judicial Proceedings Committee that will debate it, expects to support some version of the legislation.

"It's clear that we're wasting resources and turning people's lives upside down to no obvious good end," the Montgomery County Democrat said.

But Frederick County Republican Del. Michael J. Hough said that approving such a law would be a mistake. "We're talking about criminals and people who are coming into this country illegally."

[Return to Top](#)

SUN POLL O'Malley lags in bid for president | [View Clip](#)

02/16/2014

Baltimore Sun - Online

Gov. Martin O'Malley may have his eye on running for the White House, but a new Baltimore Sun poll suggests he could have a tough time winning the Democratic primary election in his own state.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outpolled O'Malley by nearly 10 to 1 among

likely Maryland Democratic voters asked to name their top choice among four possible candidates to be the party's standard-bearer in the 2016 presidential election.

When asked for a favorite among Clinton, O'Malley, Vice President Joe Biden and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, 59 percent picked Clinton. Biden came in second, with 14 percent.

O'Malley, who's been openly exploring a presidential run for months, got picked by just 6 percent of the state's Democratic voters. He did only slightly better than Cuomo, who was the choice of 4 percent of those polled.

"I just don't think Martin O'Malley has the chops," said Dan Meenan, 53, a computer programmer from Baltimore County. "He's not going to wash nationally," he added.

Another favorite son, Dr. Benjamin Carson, proved to be the top pick among Maryland Republican voters asked to choose from a list of five possible presidential contenders. The other GOP prospects mentioned were former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio.

"Awesome" is what Marcia Lewandowski of Dundalk calls Carson, the renowned Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon who retired last year and took up political punditry.

"He just speaks the truth," Lewandowski, 59, said of Carson. "He's very wonderful in the way he talks about things."

With the presidential primary still two years away, the poll offers a snapshot of the support candidates would have if the vote were held today. The political landscape can change drastically. Still, O'Malley who was among the first governors to endorse Clinton in the 2008 primary faces a difficult challenge at this early stage. With Clinton dominating the potential field, he and other potential candidates must raise money and introduce themselves to voters in her shadow.

Many political observers believe O'Malley is making the right early moves to preserve a spot in the race should Clinton ultimately decide not to run. He is traveling to early voting states, such as Iowa and New Hampshire, and has been building a fundraising network beyond the state's borders.

The poll, conducted by OpinionWorks of Annapolis, was based on telephone interviews with likely Democratic and Republican primary voters and has a margin of error of 4.4 percentage points for questions about each party's primary.

The survey also asked voters of both parties statewide, as well as independents, for their assessment of the job performance of Gov. O'Malley and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. It found: Maryland voters split almost evenly in rating O'Malley's performance as governor the past seven years, with 45 percent approving and 42 percent disapproving. The remainder either weren't sure or wouldn't say.

Twenty-six percent of Maryland voters like the job Rawlings-Blake has done managing the city, while 20 percent don't. But the majority either couldn't or wouldn't pass judgment.

The margin of error for those questions is 2.8 percentage points.

Despite O'Malley's weak support for president among likely Democratic primary voters, the poll found they overwhelmingly approve of the job he's done as governor. They like his management of the state by a margin of 65 percent to 22 percent. Republicans disapprove by a whopping 81 percent to 10 percent margin.

The preference by Maryland Democrats for other presidential hopefuls "is not a good sign for him," said Steve Raabe, president of OpinionWorks. To be seen as a viable candidate on the national stage, it's "almost a prerequisite" to have the backing of your home state.

"For these second tier candidates, it's advocates from their own state who go to Iowa and New Hampshire" to sell them to voters, Raabe said. O'Malley, he said, "definitely has some work to do here at home."

It's also clear from the poll results that the state's Democrats have "tremendous affection" for Clinton, Raabe said. Though she lost to Barack Obama in Maryland's 2008 primary, she's been a well-known figure for years as First Lady in the Clinton administration, a New York senator, Obama's rival in 2008 and then secretary of state.

"Politically speaking, she's a giant," Raabe said.

Meenan, who considers himself fiscally conservative but socially liberal, is among those impressed by Clinton.

"I think she's strong and will not be pushed around by a recalcitrant Congress," he said.

"She doesn't run from things," agreed Darryl Dandridge, 50, of Baltimore. He said he's also drawn to Clinton because he rates her husband, Bill Clinton, the best president he's ever known.

"I feel he would have a little influence on what she does," Dandridge said.

But in a ray of hope for O'Malley's presidential bid, Dandridge said if Clinton does not run, "he would get my vote."

On the other hand, Sharon Delosh of Baltimore said she prefers Biden, the former longtime Delaware senator, and can't abide either Clinton or O'Malley. She expressed unhappiness with tax and fee increases adopted during O'Malley's tenure.

"It just seems like since he's been in office, everything's gone up," said Delosh, 64,

who's on disability after a long career working for an insurance broker.

Laura Mullen, 45, a state employee from Baltimore, thinks O'Malley has been "doing the best he can" with a difficult economy. But she prefers Biden because "he has experience, he's no-nonsense" and doesn't engage in "mud-slinging."

Of O'Malley, she said, "I don't think it's his time."

Frances Caughey, though, said she would vote for O'Malley for president because she thinks he's been a good governor. A Sierra Club member, she likes O'Malley's environmental record because the Chesapeake bay "needs work."

"Biden is too old, and I think Hillary is too tired," added Caughey, 71, a retired school teacher in West Laurel.

On the Republican side, Raabe said Carson's rise to the top of a short list of GOP presidential prospects goes beyond his local name recognition. He's been a guest commentator on Fox News and other conservative TV and radio shows, and billboards went up recently on some Maryland highways touting him as a candidate.

"I like his honesty and integrity," said Paul Albaugh, a 58 year-old burial vault installer in Union Bridge.

Linda Swoboda, a part-time actress and substitute teacher from Severna Park, prefers New Jersey's governor. She said recent negative publicity about possible political retaliation by Christie's administration hasn't affected her opinion of him.

"I just like his personality, I guess, and he seems to be an honest, take-charge kind of guy. And he's a big Bruce Springsteen fan," said Swoboda, who described herself as "middle-aged."

Bonnie Chandler, 70, of Street in Harford County, backs Christie but would switch to Carson if the New Jersey governor doesn't run. Chandler dismissed the investigation into the Christie administration by the Democrat-led New Jersey legislature. "It's a set-up because he's a threat to them," she said.

While Rawlings-Blake posted weak statewide approval ratings, Raabe said they likely reflect a general lack of familiarity with her outside the Baltimore area. In the city, where she is best known, she has similar-sized groups of supporters and detractors.

Lena Musgrove of Grayson Park in Southeast Baltimore pointed to a highly local reason for her disapproval of Rawlings-Blake.

"Dundalk Avenue is a mess," she said. Musgrove, a Republican who is over 65, said the road keeps being filled in and torn up again. She also differs with the mayor over raising water charges, complaining that the city isn't doing enough to collect from

utility bill deadbeats.

But Sharon Reuter, who lives in Ridgely's Delight, said she was impressed Rawlings-Blake had the vision to bring the Grand Prix to Baltimore and fought an uphill battle to keep it. While Reuter said there are a lot of things that could be improved about the city, she thinks Rawlings-Blake deserves the benefit of the doubt.

"It's a really tough job," she said. "Sure, we have city woes. I know that the crime stats are up, at least the murders are up again, and I feel like she's trying to address those things."

Baltimore Sun reporters Michael Dresser, John Fritze and Erin Cox contributed to this article. OpinionWorks of Annapolis conducted the poll for . It surveyed 1,199 likely Maryland voters by telephone Feb. 8 to 12, including 500 likely Democratic primary voters and 499 likely Republican primary voters. The margin of error is 4.4 percentage points for questions about each of the two primaries and 2.8 percentage points for general questions such as job performance of elected officials.

[Return to Top](#)

Lawn and garden: Beware de-icing the Chesapeake Bay | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Public Opinion - Online

Even in winter, unsavory chemicals get flushed down storm drains

Penn State Extension

Melting snow and ice in January 2014 carry de-icing material downstream, and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. What are you sending into the bay this winter?
(Photo by George Hurd)

Penn State Extension environmental educator George Hurd discusses the downstream impact from materials we use for de-icing or to prevent slipping.

We all know how important it is to remove ice and snow from walks to prevent injury. However, we often forget the damage that some of the materials we use to melt ice can do to plants and the environment.

For many years, we used rock salt to melt ice on roads and sidewalks. Rock salt is the most common de-icer available. However, rock salt -- sodium chloride -- is very corrosive and not good for the environment. It can weaken concrete, damage plants and affect streams when it is carried into storm water. This excess salt poses a threat to fresh water ecosystems and fish.

We have all seen the rusty bridges, guardrails and brown evergreen trees that result from using salt on roads. The best advice is to use as little as possible or buy an alternative that does not harm the environment.

According to the Maryland Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet 707, "Melting Ice Safely," a better alternative is calcium magnesium acetate (CMA). As it comes in contact with snow and ice, it will give off heat so it is more effective than salt at low temperatures. The fact sheet is available online at <http://bit.ly/1bNh5kq>.

Other alternative material for use on slippery sidewalks are sand, grit, sawdust, bird seed or cat litter. While these may not be the best products, in some situations they are easier on the environment than other products you can buy.

One thing I discourage you from using is fertilizer -- especially urea fertilizer. It will melt snow and ice but the nitrogen gets carried off by melting ice and snow, ending up in waterways and, eventually, in the Chesapeake Bay.

Whatever you choose to help get rid of ice, remember that the purpose of a de-icing material is to begin the melting process so ice will break up and can be shoveled off the sidewalk. You'll still need to shovel, too, once the de-icer has done its job.

[Return to Top](#)

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Williamsport Sun-Gazette - Online

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina's top environmental official said Monday that he briefed Gov. Pat McCrory before intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,111 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps.

Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included no requirement to force the nation's largest electricity provider to actually clean up its pollution.

The state has now put its proposed settlement on hold following the massive Feb. 2 spill triggered by a pipe collapse at one of Duke's coal ash dumps adjacent to the Dan River, which turned cloudy and gray for miles.

State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers at an oversight hearing that he spoke with the governor before his agency used its regulatory authority to intervene in lawsuits filed by a coalition of environmental groups under the federal Clean Water Act.

"When I went to brief Gov. McCrory about the initiation of those suits, he said two things," Skvarla recounted. "He said protect the environment, and do the right thing."

But Skvarla maintains he never told McCrory, a Republican who worked for Duke for 28 years, about the proposed terms of the settlement negotiated by his agency.

The citizens groups that originally tried to sue Duke opposed the state's deal, saying it shielded the company from far harsher penalties it might have faced in federal court had the state not intervened.

Skvarla bristled at coverage of the issue by The Associated Press and other news media outlets for suggesting his agency's intervention "blocked" the environmental groups from holding Duke accountable. He said those advocates are still free to voice their concerns in court, if a judge allows.

Skvarla, who previously declined an interview request from The AP, complained that reporters contacting his agency for comment weren't interested in getting "the rest of the story."

"Nobody has called and asked sufficient questions," Skvarla lamented. "There were lots of calls, but all they were asking for was quotes."

Skvarla declined to say what he considers sufficient questions or why he feels his agency, which has issued numerous news releases in the two weeks since the spill, is unable to convey its perspective to the public.

Asked if he thought a \$99,111 fine with no requirement that Duke clean up its coal ash dumps was a settlement in the best interests of the people of North Carolina, Skvarla suggested the now-scuttled deal was better than getting caught in a protracted legal fight against the energy giant.

"We are not dictators, we are not pharaohs," said Skvarla, who questioned whether Duke would have ever agreed to tougher terms.

Federal prosecutors served Skvarla's agency and Duke Energy with grand jury subpoenas demanding records as part of a federal investigation into the spill, which contaminated the river so badly public health officials advised against prolonged contact with the water or eating fish.

The state announced Monday that it will begin testing for contaminants in John H. Kerr Reservoir in Virginia, roughly 80 miles downstream from the spill site, after a sheen of gray ash was seen on the surface.

McCrory has maintained close ties to Duke since leaving the company to launch his first campaign for governor in 2008.

Campaign finance reports show Duke Energy, its political action committee, executives and their immediate families have donated at least \$1.1 million to McCrory's campaign and affiliated groups that spent money on TV ads, mailings and events to support him.

After becoming governor on his second try in 2012, McCrory gained authority to make numerous decisions that could affect Duke's bottom line, including making appointments at the state commission that approves utility rates.

On a state ethics form last year, the governor indicated that his investment portfolio includes holdings of Duke stock valued in excess of \$10,000, though he is under no legal obligation to disclose the specific amount and refused to do so as recently as last week.

McCrory has said he sees no conflict of interest in his role as elected official and corporate shareholder.

George Everett, Duke's director of environmental and legislative affairs, told state lawmakers Monday that the company is sorry about the spill and will be accountable for the cleanup. But beyond scooping out a big pile of coal ash from the Dan at its plant, it is unclear how the tens of thousands of tons of toxic material can be removed now that it has settled to the bottom of the river for miles downstream.

Tom Reeder, the state's director of water quality, said testing shows the levels of arsenic, lead and other contaminants that spiked in the immediate wake of the spill are returning to levels considered safe for humans. However he conceded it may be too late for some aquatic species living in the river and worried about the long-term effects of the coal ash in the Dan.

"If you're a mollusk and covered with ash then, yeah, you're gonna die," Reeder said.

Follow Associated Press reporter Michael Biesecker at [Twitter.com/mbieseck](https://twitter.com/mbieseck)

[Return to Top](#)

Lake Twp. might host frack-water waste site | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Times Leader - Online

Company applies to county for variance

By Jon O'Connell joconnell@civitasmedia.com

LAKE TWP. — A Berwick-based company wants to build a water-recycling facility in

Lake Township, where it proposes to hold water used in hydraulic fracturing.

Waveco Energy Services, a company that supplies water to natural-gas drilling companies, has applied for a variance through the Luzerne County Planning Commission to allow the property — which is more than 600 total acres and zoned for agriculture — to contain storage tanks.

According to variance application documents filed with the county, the site primarily will recycle flow-back and production water used in drilling operations, namely hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. The county zoning hearing board is to consider the variance at a meeting at 7 p.m. March 4 in the courthouse.

Fracking is a drilling technique used to retrieve gas locked inside the Marcellus Shale, a rock formation that lies under most of Pennsylvania. During fracking, drillers use several million gallons of water mixed with sand and some chemicals injected at high pressure to break up the shale and free the gas.

Most of the water used in fracking flows back to the surface and can be reused to fracture new wells.

Waveco application documents say the size of the site will equal 155 feet by 280 feet and will be set back 180 feet from Meeker Outlet Road. Other than an access road, there will be no activity outside of this space.

Sediment will be removed from the water at the site, and then the water will sit in enclosed storage tanks until it is needed for a new well.

Each truck entering the site is to undergo extensive testing for radioactive material, the application says, as fracking wastes pulled from up to several miles underground, on a few occasions in Pennsylvania, been found to be radioactive.

The property Waveco proposes to use is located north of state Route 118 and east of Loyalville Road. It is owned by 4P Realty of Blakely.

In 2010, 4P, which purchased the land in 2008, had leased it to Encana Oil and Gas USA Inc., a natural-gas production company. But Encana pulled out after its testing showed little natural gas underground.

United Sanitation Network Inc., a private garbage hauling company in Duryea, applied for a general permit for the Waveco facility through the state Department of Environmental Protection's waste management program.

If Luzerne County grants the zoning variance, the facility would be permitted under the program, said DEP regional spokeswoman Colleen Connolly.

The permit application at this time is under technical review by the department. The

application to DEP was not available to the public as of Monday, but it is expected to be released soon.

Lake Township Supervisor Robert Pace said he has not taken a stance on the issue as he just learned last week that Wavco had applied for the variance. He said he has been researching possible problems that might accompany the facility.

“We should investigate it either way,” Pace said. “My perspective was that if this is something that is good for Lake Township, then we should embrace it. And if it's a hazard for the township, then we should oppose it.”

Of Pace's initial concerns, he said he wants to know how many trucks will be traveling over township roads and bridges to reach the facility each week.

The 5,000-gallon-sized truck will be most common to visit the facility, application papers say. These trucks can weigh 65,000 pounds to 75,000 pounds when fully loaded.

Dump trucks to haul away sediment left in the tanks also are to frequent the site.

State law requires extra precautions to be taken in protecting the ground from spills, and Wavco has identified that it will install containment filters below the entire site and a containment barrier around storage areas to catch potential spills.

[Return to Top](#)

YOUR OPINION: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Times Leader - Online

W-B officials

urge vote

on flood act

There is an emerging threat to the strength, integrity and viability of several neighborhoods in Wilkes-Barre. This threat does not come from nature but from a program that was designed to protect homeowners and incentivize property acquisition.

The reforms of the Biggert-Waters Act of 2012 will devastate the real estate market in vital areas of the city by arbitrarily escalating flood insurance costs as much as 20 percent to 25 percent per year in future years. Residents in low-lying creek areas could expect insurance rates to skyrocket from \$600 to \$6,000 a year in some cases, as grandfather clauses and other protections expire. The bill was intended to make the

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) more financially solvent, but it fails to consider that all “high-risk” areas are not created equal.

From Solomon Creek to Mill Creek and all points in between, many city residents live in family homes that were handed down from generation to generation. Subsidies from the federal government kept flood insurance affordable for decades, but the Biggert-Waters bill removed those subsidies, which precipitated the escalating insurance costs.

The federal government decided to no longer incentivize property development or ownership in “high-risk” areas; however, in many cases, such as Solomon Creek, these neighborhoods are only labeled high risk because long-promised, flood control and mitigation projects have been delayed. These homes are nestled in urban environments next to small creeks. We are not talking about lavish homes built on beachfront property.

We applaud the goals of making the NFIP more financially sustainable for decades to come, but we object to the books being balanced on the backs of hardworking Wilkes-

Barre residents and others just like them across the country. We have tirelessly advocated for these reforms to be delayed and, early on, we marshaled the support of our federal lawmakers including Sen. Bob Casey and Congressman Matt Cartwright.

Sen. Casey was instrumental in passing a recent Senate bill to delay the changes for four years. Congressman Cartwright is a co-sponsor of the House version of the bill called “the Homeowners Flood Insurance Act.” The Republican-controlled House had not scheduled it for a vote as of last week, but the Republican leadership already has indicated it will water down the Senate bill. We call on Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, to give this important bill an up or down vote in the lower chamber and leave the Senate bill unblemished.

In an era dominated by partisan gridlock, this remains one of the few issues that enjoys bipartisan and geographical support from the Northeastern United States to the Deep South. A temporary delay in the flood insurance increases would provide a window for all levels of government to work together and invest in flood-control projects that will increase protection for homeowners, lower insurance risk and cost, and create much needed construction jobs amid a still sluggish economic recovery.

Thomas M. Leighton

George Brown

Councilman, District A

Wilkes-Barre

Clean-air

standards

pursued

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is expected to finalize its proposed cleaner gasoline and vehicle standards in February. These standards will help reduce harmful pollution that can trigger asthma attacks and other dangerous health impacts.

Fortunately, Congressman Matt Cartwright recognizes that clean air is important for public health and has signed a letter to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy urging that the standards be finalized without further delay.

The sooner they're implemented, the sooner the results will be felt: We'll avoid tens of thousands of asthma attacks and up to 2,500 premature deaths per year, and many lost days at school and work from being sick. And at the cost of just a penny per gallon, this is a good deal for public health.

Congressman Cartwright stood up for his constituents, especially kids, the elderly, and those with respiratory illnesses, by making the case to the EPA that we need these standards in place now.

Deborah Brown

President and CEO

American Lung Association

in Pennsylvania

Camp Hill

GOP offers

better plan

for recovery

In response to letter writer Dale Eastman's lament on Republicans winning the House again, and maybe the Senate, I say on to recovery!

Vote Republican and fewer people will need unemployment benefits and food stamps. The long extension of unemployment benefits and the great increase in the food stamp program are due to the ineptitude of the Obama administration's job growth-recovery program, which does not exist.

Take an Econ 101 class, Mr. Eastman, so that you can learn that jobs come from an economic climate favorable to the private sector, not the government. Obama and the

Democrats have spent a trillion dollars on programs to keep the US in a constant 7 percent unemployment rate for five years.

Republican economic recovery stresses tax cuts for businesses and the middle class, elimination of unnecessary and redundant government regulation, opening of our lands for natural resource development, and changing the Affordable Care Act so that people have their old insurance and jobs will not be lost. "Obamacare" is a job-killer, and no jobs means no increase in income, a tax decrease, and less revenue for the government.

As for the rich, did you ever hear of philanthropy? Who built the prestigious hospitals, libraries and civic centers? Successful businesses and rich folk did. Statistics show that Republicans, on average, donate more to charities than Democrats. I am a Fox News-watching Christian, and what you fail to comprehend is that no Republican is opposed to government welfare. We want to bolster it so that fewer people need it and more funds are available for its services.

We, the tea party-types, don't concentrate on gays. You are, being strangely fixated on giving them more rights than they already have under the Fifth and 14th amendments. That's the "Gospel truth," Mr. Eastman. "You should take care of the poor."

So, let's do it the right way by voting Republican in 2014 and '16, and watch GDP growth, employment and income reach levels that can support those in need.

[Return to Top](#)

Letter to the editor | Put gas line safety first | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Centre Daily Times - Online

Since the Marcellus gas industry was introduced into this state, we have been told how safe it is and that people should not be concerned or worried about it.

So far, it has polluted cold water resources, destroyed millions of acres of timber and vegetation, created constant noise pollution in remote areas noted for tranquility and enjoyment.

If these incidents were not bad enough to cause alarm, within the past week a gas well in western Pennsylvania exploded, killing one person and injuring others as it was being connected to the gas transmission line.

On Thursday a natural gas line in Kentucky, much like the one being installed in State College, exploded, destroying three houses, two barns and several cars. One person was burned.

Imagine what an event like this could do in a more populated area, like State College.

The incident rates are getting alarming for an industry that is supported by our governor as being safe.

With the current rapid development of the Marcellus gas drilling here in the commonwealth, more stringent enforcement of environmental and safety rules must be approved. The current inspection scheduling does not appear to be adequate for an industry that is constantly on the move. Additional spot inspections should be required to ensure total compliance.

[Return to Top](#)

Solobay announces run for re-election | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Observer-Reporter - Online

Published Feb 17, 2014 at 10:44 pm (Updated Feb 17, 2014 at 10:44 pm)

Sen. Tim Solobay

State Sen. Tim Solobay, D-Canonsburg, formally announced his plan to run for re-election.

Solobay was elected in 2010 to the Senate seat in the 46th District, which now encompasses Greene County and parts of Washington and Beaver counties. Camera Bartolotta, a Monongahela businesswoman, is seeking the Republican nomination in the primary election.

Solobay said it was an easy decision to run for re-election.

“Public service is what I love,” Solobay said in a news release. “I am honored that the people of the 46th District have entrusted me with the responsibilities of this office. I have worked very hard, and I remain enthusiastic and energized to continue to serve.”

A lifelong resident of Canonsburg, Solobay holds a bachelor's degree in management from California Coastal University and graduated from the Washington Hospital School of Radiologic Technology. Solobay worked as a state constable and radiographer before taking public office, serving 12 years as a state representative before being elected to the state Senate.

Solobay was named Democratic chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and co-chairman of the newly formed Coal Caucus.

He also was appointed to the Senate's Emergency Management Agency.

Solobay said securing funds for numerous infrastructure projects, aiding veterans and steering reforms for the state's small games of chance law are among his accomplishments in the Senate.

He also said he advocated for safe energy policy, most notably natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale.

“During the last four years, I have worked to bring together local business officials and members of the Legislature to strike a balance between economic expansion and regulatory concerns,” he said. “Additionally, we have organized a number of forums at career and technology centers throughout the district where key energy industry personnel and educators discussed career opportunities with our youth.”

[Return to Top](#)

Crosby lecture speaker announced | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Observer-Reporter - Online

Published Feb 17, 2014 at 10:16 pm (Updated Feb 17, 2014 at 10:16 pm)

Jonathan Waterman

WAYNESBURG – Waynesburg University will host Jonathan Waterman as the Glenn A. & Jane L. Crosby Lecture Series speaker at 7:30 p.m. March 4.

The lecture will be held in the Goodwin Performing Arts Center and a book signing will follow the lecture. Admission is free and the public is invited.

Waterman's hour-long lecture, “Plastic Garbage Patch,” is based on his 2,500-mile sailing journey from San Diego to Honolulu. During this voyage, Waterman worked as the ship journalist of the 132-foot brigantine Robert C. Seamans, studying along with 37 researchers the amount of plastic and Japanese tsunami debris in the water. His National Geographic dispatches of the findings on the pollution in the Pacific Ocean can be found at <http://jonathanwaterman.com/index.php/field-notebook>.

Waterman has held several titles such as a magazine editor, park ranger and wilderness guide, but what he most identifies himself as is a writer and photographer. Frequently supported by the National Geographic Society, his renowned adventurous undertakings include his solo trip of the Northwest Passage, winter ascent of Denali's Cassin Ridge and descent of the Colorado River to sea.

Waterman has received much recognition for the 12 books he has written, including magazine awards, a Special Achievement Award from the National Park Service, a

literary fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and an Emmy. Some of his titles include “Northern Exposures: An Adventuring Career in Stories and Images,” “Arctic Crossing” and “In the Shadow of Denali.”

For more information about Waterman, visit www.jonathanwaterman.com.

The Glenn A. & Jane L. Crosby Lectures, funded by 1950 Magna Cum Laude graduates of Waynesburg College, Glenn A. and Jane Lichtenfels Crosby, bring to the university visiting scholars who are distinguished in their disciplines. During the visit, the scholars interact with faculty, staff and students, giving guest lectures in classes, formal presentations and informal group talks. The event culminates in a final public lecture.

[Return to Top](#)

Thunder/Enlightning, Feb. 18, 2014 | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Republican & Herald - Online

I am amazed and horrified at all the animal abuse cases on the local television news. There are some really sick people amongst us. I am an animal activist and regularly petition our legislators to enact stronger laws to punish these abusers. All animals are innocent creatures and deserve only love and kindness from us humans.

While I in no way condone animal abuse, I wish people would put all that energy into thwarting people abuse.

Great god Obama said that he would bypass Congress to get what he wants. Why not? He did it before and he went against the Constitution also and he got away with that. He should be impeached and thrown in jail. Even that might be too good for that bird.

Minersville

Roland Raudenbush was dead on in his letter regarding the liberal bias in the news media and their constant effort to influence public opinion rather than facts and reporting the news.

Minersville

Maybe the news media isn't too liberal, maybe he's too conservative. Ever think of that? The truth of anything usually lies somewhere in the middle.

I would like to congratulate the new president at the West End Fire Company. I'm sure he will be an honest and loyal president.

Mahanoy City

OK, people. We have the majority in council now so let's back them up. Let's start going to these meetings and asking questions. There's a lot of money missing and a lot of politics going on but they need our help too. Let's show them we care. We got them in. Let's back them up. They're doing a great job so far just by asking questions. We can help them out by going to these meetings, sewer, borough and water.

Shenandoah

So coal is that bad. Well, excuse me. Fracking is another thing we need to worry about. We should not need to pay taxes for the roads and bridges to be repaired. The other states are taxing Marcellus Shale. I guess Corbett thinks we have a lot of money during these hard times of unemployment. Get taxing fracking.

[Return to Top](#)

Berwick-based company applies to build natural gas wastewater treatment plant | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Citizens' Voice - Online, The

By Elizabeth Skrapits (Staff Writer)

The state Department of Environmental Protection has received an application for a Berwick-based company to build a natural gas wastewater treatment plant in Lake Township.

Waveco Energy Services applied for a general permit to build a wastewater treatment facility in Lake Township, DEP Spokeswoman Colleen Connolly confirmed. She said the company would also need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, which controls water pollution.

The application is under review, and no decision has been made yet, Connolly said.

Waveco already applied to the Luzerne County zoning hearing board for a use variance to build a recycling center to process water used in hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" on an acre of land leased from 4-P Realty, located off Meeker Outlet Road at Sholtis Road. A zoning hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m. March 4 at the courthouse.

Fracking involves blasting millions of gallons of chemical-treated water deep underground to crack open the shale and release natural gas trapped in the porous rock. The water, which is salty and full of chemicals, has to be disposed of in specific ways or else recycled, usually for reuse in the drilling process.

In documents submitted to the Luzerne County planning commission, Waveco plans to

build the fenced-in facility on a gravel parking lot with an impermeable surface underneath and a soil berm around it. There would be a solar-powered guard trailer and up to 30 settling and storage tanks holding 20,000 gallons of water apiece.

"The tanks are enclosed and have removable covers that allow access to remove the sediment on a periodic basis," according to documents filed with Luzerne County. This would be taken to a landfill "in accordance with all state and federal disposal requirements."

The documents state that pickup and drop-off of water "is based on a predetermined schedule during normal business hours of 6 a.m. to 7 p.m." and that fewer than five truck trips are anticipated per week in the initial phases of the operation.

One of the other documents states, "Site access after hours will be limited unless the site is operating on a 24/7 basis. Which would mean that personnel would be on site all at times during the day."

Numerous calls to Waveco Chief Operating Officer Chris Cardell and the company's other principal, Gary Urnoski, were not returned.

Lake Township supervisor Robert Pace said township officials are in the process of investigating Waveco's proposal.

"If this is something that's beneficial to Lake Township, it's something we should embrace. But if it's something detrimental to the township, then we need to oppose it," he said.

The township invited Waveco to make a presentation, Pace said.

"My understanding was they agreed to do it, and that was it. We never heard back from them," he said.

"We're hoping to hear from them yet."

eskrapits@citizensvoice.com, 570-821-2072

[Return to Top](#)

Lehigh Valley fly fishing seminar in March | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Morning Call - Online

If you've never fly-fished before or have been intimidated by it in the past, mark Saturday, March 15, on your calendar with a red star.

The 2014 PaFlyFish.com Fly Fishing Instructional Jamboree will take place 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Wildlands Conservancy, 3701 Orchard Place, Lower Macungie Township.

The event is free and open to the public, and you can stay as long as you want for the seven-station set-up, even repeating some of the sessions.

Following a meet-and-greet at 8 a.m., PaFlyFish.com will conduct presentations on gear set-up; fly-fishing knot instruction; entomology; fly-tying demonstrations; fly-casting instruction; where to fish; and wild brook trout fishing.

After a two-hour break for lunch, there will be a two-hour on-stream fly fishing-instruction near the Heritage Fly Shop, 2643 Fish Hatchery Road, Allentown, in Lehigh Parkway.

Dance the night away Saturday: The Delaware River Shad Fishermen's Association is holding a dance 6 p.m. Saturday at Blue Mountain Fish & Game Association, 4190 Wood Drive, Lehigh Township.

The event benefits the group's free Youth Education Day. Tickets are \$15 at the door.

Marcellus Shale discussion at fly-fishing show: The Fly Fishing Show at the Lancaster County Convention Center, 3 E. Vine Street, Lancaster, will feature a pair of presentations on "Shared Habitat in the Eastern Shale Gas Region: A Sportsmen's Perspective," 1 p.m. March 1 and 2.

Paula Piatt, Trout Unlimited's eastern sportsmen organizer, will lead the presentation on Marcellus and Utica Shale hydraulic fracturing and the Delaware River Basin and commission that oversees it.

Piatt will also host a booth at the show with information on T.U.'s Eastern Shale Gas Campaign and the Sportsmen Alliance for Marcellus Conservation.

Trout Unlimited Spring Event: The Forks of the Delaware, Hokendauqua, Little Lehigh and Monocacy chapters of Trout Unlimited are holding their 12th annual Spring Event 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 22, at the East Bath Rod and Gun Club, 7905 Township Line Road, East Allen Township.

The event takes place one week before the Southeast regional trout season opener.

Joe Baylog, president of the Forks of the Delaware chapter, will speak on "Do It Yourself Alaska: Fly Fishing Alaska's Road System and the Kenai Peninsula." Baylog has organized eight self-guided fishing trips to Alaska for trout and salmon while also managing to take in the sights and see the many bears for which the state is famous.

Admission is free, and a continental breakfast is available. Items will be available for sale, and there will be a youth drawing.

New Jersey governor's surf fishing contest: The annual Governor's Surf Tournament for New Jersey normally takes place in October, but this year's 23rd edition has been moved to Sunday, May 18, at Island Beach State Park.

The Department of Environmental Protection moved the date to help the state's fishing industry get a jump start on tourism while separating the event from a variety of other outdoors-related events in the fall.

"We're anticipating some improved surf-fishing opportunities in the spring and a bigger crowd of anglers, including many families and youths who will be able to participate in this fun event," said DEP Director of Fish and Wildlife Dave Chanda.

"I encourage anglers of all ages and experience to come out to Island Beach and enjoy a great day of fishing, with a shot at some nice striped bass and bluefish, right here at the Jersey Shore."

The pre-registration fee for the tournament is \$15 for ages 18 and older, \$20 on tournament day. Registration for ages 13-17 is \$5 and is free for children 12 and under. For more information or to download a registration form, go to <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/gsft.htm>.

[Return to Top](#)

A break with the past | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Northeast Pennsylvania Weekender - Online

ASHLEY — The demolition of the Huber Breaker that began in January is erasing one of the last remaining significant structures of mining history in the Wyoming Valley.

The Huber was built in 1938, and began processing anthracite coal in February 1939. At the time, the Huber had the most modern design and operations of any coal breaker in the United States.

Chester Kulesa, site administrator for the Anthracite Heritage Museum in Scranton, said the breaker was named in honor of Glen Alden Coal Co. chairman Charles F. Huber. Huber attained his position as the chairman at age 30, and was no stranger to the business — he started out as a mine laborer as a teenager.

Function of a breaker

Kulesa said a breaker processes anthracite coal for the market by crushing, sizing and cleaning the coal for the consumer to use. The Huber went through up to 7,000 tons of anthracite coal per day, and featured a washing plant circulating water at a rate of

8,200 gallons per minute.

“The coal in mine cars was dumped into a pit at the foot of a conveyor line outside the breaker and taken to the top of the structure,” Kulesa said. “It was then passed over ‘bull shakers,’ which are screens having larger perforations to remove the pieces larger than ‘grate’ size. These larger pieces are conveyed to the main rolls where they are broken into sizes grate and smaller.”

Some of that coal would then roll along chutes to smaller rollers, where it would be broken into even smaller sizes.

Kulesa said those rollers were provided so a certain percentage of smaller sizes could be broken down to be used in stoves as per the market demand. Materials would roll over shaking screens under strong jets of water to separate larger-size material from the smaller sizes.

The coal would then pass into so-called Menzies cones, which would separate rock from coal.

“The rock and slate, being heavier than the anthracite, sank to the bottom and were conveyed to the refuse banks outside of the breaker,” Kulesa said. “After the clean anthracite leaves the Menzies cones, any adhering waste particles are removed with cascades of water.”

Screens then separated the sizes of coal into loading pockets at the bottom of the breaker, where they would be loaded into railroad cars for delivery.

The Glen Alden Co. wanted to do something different to help distinguish its coal from the competition. To do so, Kulesa said the company began to spray the coal with a blue dye and encourage the consumer to ask for “Blue Coal” when ordering.

Fall from grace

The Huber Breaker continued breaking and sorting coal well into the 1970s before it was finally closed to due to the declining use of coal in 1976. The structure, which was easily seen by motorists driving northbound on Interstate 81, was finally silent.

But that wasn't the end of the story.

The Ashley Huber Breaker Preservation Society was founded in 1990. Its mission: to preserve the Huber Breaker site “for its adaptive reuse as a historical site and park.”

The organization also works to aid other organizations to preserve and reuse other historical sites in the Wyoming Valley.

Ray Clarke, chairman and treasurer of the society, had a personal interest in preserving the old site. Clark, 80, was born and raised in the Wyoming Valley. He used to pass by

the old site every day.

Now, what was once a part of Clarke's daily life is gone.

“It's part of our history and culture here,” he said. “It's just sad to see it go.”

The property had been owned by No. 1 Contracting of South Main Street, Ashley, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in March 2010 and converted to Chapter 7 in November of that year, requiring the business to liquidate its assets, equipment and property. The Huber Breaker had an estimated 900 tons of steel.

Demolition of the building began in January, but was halted. Colleen Connolly, spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Protection, said the Philadelphia-based Paselo Logistics LLC failed to file a 10-day notice of demolition.

“That's required for anyone tearing down a structure,” Connolly said.

The 10-day notice informs DEP how demolition crews will control the dust that's flying around, as well as how they have handled any asbestos that could potentially be found. Demolition initially stopped, and Connolly said paperwork was provided showing that the building housing a conveyor belt was in danger of collapsing.

As a result, work was allowed to continue. Connolly also said an asbestos abatement inspector will be on site to handle any further asbestos discoveries. No timetable has been given on when the project will be complete.

Clark said the initial goal was to turn the hulking structure into a tool to educate students about the area's history in the anthracite coal industry. Instead, the Preservation Society is building a Miners Memorial Park on 3.1 acres along Main Street, within the shadow of the Huber.

Nevertheless, Clark called the end of the breaker a “signature moment” and a loss of a gem representing the area's history and culture.

[Return to Top](#)

Native Americans vow a last stand to block Keystone XL pipeline | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

McClatchy Washington Bureau February 17, 2014

WASHINGTON — Faith Spotted Eagle figures that building a crude oil pipeline from Canada to the U.S. Gulf Coast would bring little to Indian Country besides more crime and dirty water, but she doubts that Native Americans will ever get the U.S.

government to block the \$7 billion project.

“There is no way for Native people to say no – there never has been,” said Spotted Eagle, 65, a Yankton Sioux tribal elder from Lake Andes, S.D. “Our history has caused us not to be optimistic. . . . When you have capitalism, you have to have an underclass – and we're the underclass.”

Opponents may be down after a State Department study found that the proposed Keystone XL pipeline would not contribute to global warming. But they haven't abandoned their goal of killing what some call “the black snake.”

In South Dakota, home to some of the nation's poorest American Indians, tribes are busy preparing for nonviolent battle with “resistance training” aimed at TransCanada, the company that wants to develop the 1,700-mile pipeline.

While organizers said they want to keep their strategy a secret, they're considering everything from vigils to civil disobedience to blockades to thwart the moving of construction equipment and the delivery of materials.

“We're going to do everything we possibly can,” said Greg Grey Cloud of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, who attended a two-day conference and training session in Rapid City last week sponsored by the Oglala Sioux Tribe called “Help Save Mother Earth from the Keystone Pipeline.” He said tribes are considering setting up encampments to follow the construction, but he stressed that any actions would be peaceful. “We're not going to damage anything or riot or anything like that,” he said.

Like much of the country, however, tribal members are divided over the pipeline. In South Dakota, the battle pits those who fear irreversible effects on the environment and public safety against those who trumpet the economic payoff and a chance to cash in on a kind of big development project that rarely comes along.

In Winner, S.D., where the population numbers fewer than 3,000, Mayor Jess Keesis is eager to welcome construction workers from a 600-member “man camp” that would open just 10 miles from town if President Barack Obama approves the pipeline.

“Out here on the prairie, you know, we're a tough people,” said Keesis, who's also a member of the Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation in Kansas. “We deal with drought and eight-foot blizzards and all kinds of stuff all the time, so anytime we can get something like this to give us a shot, it's a good thing.”

Opponents say the risks are too great.

Two weeks ago, an alliance of Native American groups approved a statement saying emphatically that no pipeline would be allowed in South Dakota and that tribes stand ready to protect their “sacred water” and other natural resources.

That includes Native women, who opponents of the pipeline say would become easy prey for thousands of temporary construction workers housed in work camps. According to the federal government, one of every three Indian women are either raped or sexually assaulted during their lifetimes, with the majority of attacks done by non-Native men.

“If you like to drink water, if you like your children not being harmed, if you don't want your women being harmed, then say no to the pipeline,” Grey Cloud said.
“Because once it comes, it's going to destruct everything.”

Opponents said they don't want to have to follow through on their plans. They hope that they have the ultimate trump card with a president who just happens to be an adopted Indian. That would be Barack Black Eagle, who was formally adopted by Hartford and Mary Black Eagle of Montana's Crow Indian Tribe in 2008, when he visited the tribal reservation during his first presidential run.

“They didn't do that by accident – they saw something in him, and I hope he recognizes that within himself,” Spotted Eagle said.

Grey Cloud said Obama would be “going against his word” if he approves the pipeline:
“His main promise was to not allow pollution in our area.”

Keesis said the project carries risks but ultimately would be a winner for the region. He said the city of Winner and surrounding Tripp County would get a windfall of roughly \$900,000 a year from construction workers patronizing the town's restaurants, bars and its recently upgraded digital theater. Even the city would make money, hauling liquid waste from the nearby construction camp to its municipal facilities.

After spending 20 years working in oilfields and boomtowns, he's convinced that much has changed, with construction workers “under the gun to behave.”

“I've been in boomtowns all my life: Wyoming, Texas, California, Colorado, Alaska, everywhere,” he said. “I don't think it's going to be near as bad as what people have in their minds. The oilfield, as with any other occupation like this, has really mellowed over the last 20 years. It's not the Wild West like it used to be. . . . But you've got to take a little bad with the good.”

Obama, who has not said when he'll make a final decision, is under heavy pressure to approve the project. Just last week, all 45 Republican senators sent a letter to the president, saying thousands of jobs are at stake and reminding him that he had promised them to make a decision by the end of 2013.

Nationally, project backers appear to be riding the momentum, armed with a State Department report on Jan. 31 that minimized the climate change impact of building the pipeline. Republican House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio said the report shows Americans that there is “no reason, scientific or otherwise, to block this project any

longer.”

While Obama has kept mum, his administration has been offering hope to tribal officials.

“If we're developing an area that runs through Indian Country, it's very important that we reach an agreement that makes sense to tribes,” Interior Secretary Sally Jewell told tribal officials during a visit to Oklahoma in November, according to a story published in the Native American Times. “If not, that might mean the pipeline or transmission line goes somewhere else.”

In South Dakota, the proposed line would not go through any of the state's nine reservations, but opponents say its close proximity would still pose a hazard.

TransCanada officials say they've worked closely with the tribes, even halting work in northeast Texas last year as a team of archaeological contractors dug for Indian artifacts at a sacred site.

With the southern section of the pipeline already open, company spokesman Terry Cunha said TransCanada is now working with 17 tribes in South Dakota, Montana and Nebraska, where the company needs Obama's approval to build. He said the company hopes to begin work in those states in 2015.

Cunha said the company expects the pipeline to have a “limited impact” on the environment and that its work camps will be provided with around-the-clock security.

“We see it as a positive benefit,” he said.

Besides the short-term construction work, Keesis said his city would gain another 30 to 40 permanent residents who would work on pipeline-related jobs. He said Winner needs a lift, noting that since the city shut down its strip clubs a few years back, fewer pheasant hunters are visiting, opting to stay in big hunting lodges nearby.

“When I moved here, during the first three weeks of pheasant season, you couldn't find a parking space,” he said. “Now you can park anywhere.”

But the economic argument is a hard sell for many tribal members in South Dakota, where history is still raw. It's the scene of some of the bloodiest battles between Indians and the federal government, including the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee Creek by the U.S. 7th Cavalry that killed nearly 300 Sioux.

Spotted Eagle said she feels obligated to try to stop the pipeline, both to provide toxic-free land and water for her grandchildren and to protect women from attacks.

“This is a form of militarism, bringing in these man camps,” said Spotted Eagle. “For those of us who have the history, it smacks of repetitive economics, when they put us

in forts and they wanted our land. . . . All we're willing to do here is sell our soul, just for the economy. That's the dark side.”

[Return to Top](#)

Be wary of forest drilling | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Republican & Herald - Online

Pennsylvania long has been a national leader in conservation, keeping Penn's Woods accessible. There is a state park within 25 miles of every Pennsylvania address. Vast stretches of forest across the state belie its status as a populous state.

As Gov. Tom Corbett plans to make more of that valuable publicly preserved land available to the gas industry, it's useful to remember the context in which it became unavailable, and Corbett's initial reaction to that unavailability.

After the state already had authorized drilling leases on nearly half of the 1.5 million acres it owns across the Marcellus Shale development area, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources studied what land remained. It found that the remaining acreage was in ecologically sensitive areas, or could not be accessed without cutting through the forest, or both.

Based on that finding, Gov. Ed Rendell issued a moratorium on new gas leases in 2010.

Corbett, then a gubernatorial candidate, misconstrued the moratorium as if Rendell had cut off the industry's access to all state-owned land, which clearly was not the case. But the reaction was a foreshadowing of the degree to which Corbett, as governor, later would come to advocate the industry's prerogatives.

To that end, Corbett will not endorse a fair extraction tax on gas, like those in every other gas-producing state, to fairly compensate Pennsylvanians for the value of the gas extracted by the industry. Now, he wants to partially fund the state budget by lifting the moratorium on new drilling.

Corbett contends that access to forest land would be only subterranean rather than from the surface, in that drillers could drill laterally from well pads on nearby private land.

But even the governor recognizes that drilling's physical impact extends beyond the well pad. That's why, instead of an extraction tax, he has endorsed the state's "local impact fee," which compensates entire counties that host drilling. Drilling and fracking are heavy industrial activities that have implications for air, water and infrastructure beyond the work site.

Corbett believes his plan would generate \$75 million, which he would put in the general fund the first year but then use for conservation.

Lawmakers should be wary of the proposal. Conservation should not have to be funded by allowing industrial processes on conserved land. And it is a poor precedent to allow the use of conservation land to fund the general budget.

[Return to Top](#)

Chambersburg hopes to fuel vehicles with natural gas | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Public Opinion - Online

Chambersburg The Borough of Chambersburg is keeping alive its hopes to fuel area vehicles with compressed natural gas.

Borough council recently took action to stow away state grants for the project by turning the development over to a Pennsylvania company with experience in the industry.

It's a classic chicken-and-the-egg project. Currently there's no chicken and no eggs just curiosity, hope and derring-do.

In essence, Chambersburg is creating a new industry, according to L. Michael Ross, president of the Franklin County Area Development Corp.

"They are betting on the fact they are on the forefront of a kind of technology that will gain traction in the industry," Ross said. "They are trying to create a demand for something so the technology can be deployed."

The CNG station would not be a place to buy bottled gas for the backyard grill or home heating propane. The borough is not in the propane business and has no interest in a liquefied natural gas facility, according to Chambersburg Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill.

CNG is natural gas compressed to less than 1 percent of its volume. It burns cleaner than diesel fuel or gasoline. Chambersburg, one of two municipal gas utilities in Pennsylvania, would supply the gas to be compressed,

Fleets of commercial and municipal vehicles trash trucks, buses and other vehicles are targeted be the first customers, not the family sport utility vehicle.

"There is a chicken and egg problem currently between refueling infrastructure and vehicles," Dan Horning of the American Public Gas Association. "Consumers do not want to purchase CNG vehicles because of the lack of refueling infrastructure; they can

only travel so far before having to turn around to refuel. And businesses won't build infrastructure because few people currently own CNG vehicles."

Chambersburg's CNG station would be the first in the region. There are just 669 CNG stations in the U.S., the nearest are in New Holland, State College and Baltimore, Md., according to the U.S. Energy Department's Alternative Fuels Data Center.

In 2012 the U.S. had about 250,000 vehicles powered by CNG, most of them delivery trucks and buses, according to GE Global Research.

That's less than 1 percent of the vehicles registered in the nation. Major car manufacturers are beginning to offer models that run on CNG. The CNG Honda Civic has been in the U.S. 15 years, and fewer than 2,000 were sold last year.

The lack of convenient fueling stations has prevented greater adoption of the technology, according to GE.

"North America is expected to see some of the fastest growth due to abundant proven reserves and the low cost of domestically produced natural gas," according to the trade group, Natural Gas Vehicles for America. The U.S. has less than 1 percent of the world's natural gas-powered vehicles and ranks 17th.

Natural gas, both CNG and liquefied natural gas, is expected in 10 years to power 9 percent of the world's transportation fleets, according to NGVA.

Three state grants totalling \$1.5 million have been dedicated to building and equipping a Chambersburg CNG station and jump starting demand. O-Ring CNG Fuel Systems LP was to be the concessionaire of the borough-owned station. The borough was to own the CNG.

The borough, however, has been unable to secure sales agreements for fueling fleets of vehicles, according to Stonehill. The borough's agreement to buy land on Wayne Avenue for the station also has expired.

With O-Ring taking the lead on the project, the grant agreements must be altered, according to Stonehill. O-Ring would acquire an interest in the real estate, own the manufactured CNG and sell CNG directly to customers.

A key is creating demand for CNG. That is unlikely to come initially from the borough's fleet.

"We would likely encourage the use of grant money to retrofit and replace private fleets first before addressing borough vehicles," Stonehill said, "as it is our goal to sell more gas to others rather than concentrate on saving fuel expenses for ourselves. We are approaching this as an opportunity for the Gas Department to sell additional gas and to provide economic benefit to local businesses."

Large fleets of transit buses and refuse trucks traveling many miles benefit most from CNG, according to Energy Department's National Renewable Energy Laboratory. "At any given fleet size, refuse projects are slightly more profitable than transit projects, and both are much more profitable than school buses," according to a June 2010 report.

"CNG stations work best serving centralized fleets," APGA's Horning said. "This applies to urban, suburban, and rural areas. For example, city buses that travel a certain route, or a UPS delivery truck that serves a specific area, can plan how far they can travel before returning to the local station to refuel."

APGA endorsed Chambersburg's initial proposal to construct a fast-fill CNG station and to convert or replace about 15 municipal vehicles and 15 IESI vehicles to CNG. Chambersburg and IESI would reduce the area's dependence on foreign oil by annually saving 152,000 gallons of diesel use. The annual fuel cost savings would be \$252,000.

CNG is both less expensive and more environmentally friendly than diesel or gasoline, according to NGVA. CNG is about \$1.50 less per gallon than gasoline. With the production of natural gas from Marcellus shale and other deposits the price of CNG is projected to remain stable for more than a decade.

Gov. Tom Corbett in May announced a \$472,000 Act 13 grant to the Borough of Chambersburg, working with IESI and Shippensburg Borough, to purchase and retrofit 19 CNG vehicles.

IESI, a Progressive Waste Solutions company, runs a trash collection operation and landfill in Greene Township.

One of its trucks, equipped to operate on both CNG and conventional fuel, had been using the borough's temporary CNG station at the borough's Customer Service Center on Franklin Street, Stonehill said. The borough dismantled the temporary station.

Progressive Waste Solutions, one of the largest trash haulers in North America, has converted fleets to CNG elsewhere.

Stonehill said the borough does not have any CNG vehicles, but has six trash trucks, electric line trucks and heavy pickup trucks that could be converted.

At one point Franklin County looked at converting its fleet of small buses that transport the elderly and disabled.

"The county has been following the borough's CNG station initiative with great interest, but we have no plans at this time to convert any vehicles," Franklin County Commissioner David Keller said.

Chambersburg Borough Council on Feb. 10 changed the strategy for developing a

CNG station and authorized Stonehill to ask for an extension of the grants. The state must approve the change.

"Although we will still get benefit from the sale of CNG, Chambersburg would enjoy little or no risks by supporting O-Ring Fuel System's development efforts," Stonehill said.

O-ring, founded in 2008 by Robert Beatty, operates CNG stations in Brookville, Punxsutawney, and Coolspring and is expanding its operations. Beatty did not respond Friday to an email about this story.

The company's goal is to promote the use of CNG to boost the economy, reduce foreign oil purchases, enhance national security, create more jobs for U.S. workers and reduce harmful emissions, according to <http://www.oringcngfuelsystems.com>.

The CNG project follows another borough energy project of converting landfill gas to electricity.

"The borough is doing some interesting things with more environmentally friendly technologies," Ross said. "They are doing all the right things. You can be a little ahead of the technology, and you grow into it."

Jim Hook can be reached at 717-262-4759.

[Return to Top](#)

NY state eyes study's high-speed rail proposals | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

Associated PressFebruary 17, 2014

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York transportation officials are setting up public hearings to discuss options for an idea that has been kicked around for years but has yet to leave the station: high-speed passenger rail service.

Boosting the speeds of trains traveling Amtrak's Empire Corridor between New York City and Niagara Falls has been the goal of industry leaders, elected officials and transit advocates for two decades. Progress may be coming down the line now that the state Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration have scheduled hearings next month in six upstate cities along the 463-mile corridor.

New York was required to conduct the environmental review to be eligible for any new federal funding for high-speed rail, according to DOT spokesman Beau Duffy.

"It has taken longer than anyone had wanted, but we're happy this draft is out and the hearings are scheduled," said Bruce Becker of East Amherst, president of the Empire State Passengers Association, a passenger rail advocacy group.

The public meetings will be held between March 4 and March 14, starting in Albany and followed by Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, Utica and Poughkeepsie. The public will have the opportunity to view displays and question experts about the plans.

The environmental review analyzes the five most viable higher-speed options for trains with top operating speeds of 79, 90, 110 and 125 mph. The current top speed allowed west of Schenectady is 79 mph, although the study said the current average speed for Amtrak trains traveling between Buffalo and Albany barely tops 50 mph. Trains traveling between Albany and Manhattan can go as fast as 110 mph along some stretches.

The costs of the plans range from \$1.7 billion to \$6.2 billion, with the most expensive calling for construction of a third track dedicated to passenger trains traveling the 273 miles between Schenectady and the Amtrak station in Depew, just east of Buffalo. That plan, favored by Beck's group, would also add a fourth passenger track over a combined distance of nearly 40 miles in five separate locations.

Once the state selects its option, the FRA must sign off on the plan, which isn't expected to happen for an additional six months to a year, Duffy said.

Amtrak must share existing rail lines with CSX freight trains that are given track priority, a situation that frequently causes delays for the passenger trains. The main east-west choke point is the single track that runs between Albany and Schenectady. Upgrades to that 17-mile existing stretch were completed in December, while work on a new second track between the two cities is expected to begin this year, Duffy said.

New York's efforts at high-speed rail, or at least higher-speed service, have not succeeded in the past. In December 2012, the state auctioned off surplus train cars and other rail equipment from a failed project to improve service between Albany and New York City. The state bought the trains and related gear in 1998, during the Pataki administration, to test higher-speed service along the Hudson River. Technical problems and the inability of the tracks to support the faster trains sidelined the project.

State officials say high-speed trains can boost tourism and economic development in the upstate region, as well as reduce highway traffic and pollution. Improving Amtrak's on-time record and increasing the frequency of trains running between Manhattan and Buffalo would move New York state much closer to that goal, Becker said.

"Folks are using Amtrak," Becker said. "With improvement in reliability and shorter trip times, we feel more and more folks will pick Amtrak over flying to New York City or driving."

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Courier-Express - Online

Logging in from multiple locations may be the cause.

This site is optimized for mobile devices with no download required. Eight people escaped injury in a fire early Sunday in Elk County.

Thick fog lingering over the mountains Monday caused the biggest weather disruptions of the Sochi Olympics so far, with a biathlon race and a Alex Sanz

In this Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014 photo, water brought in by tankers and military vehicles is seen being distributed, in Charleston, W. Va. A chemical leak in the Elk River left residents wary about using tap water. More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, many residents are not convinced of the water's safety. (AP Photo/Alex Sanz)

Steve Helber

FILE - In this Jan. 13, 2014, file photo, Al Jones, of the West Virginia Department of General Services, tests the water as he flushes the faucet and opens a restroom on the first floor of the State Capitol in Charleston, W. Va. More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, many residents are not convinced of the water's safety. (AP Photo/Steve Helber, File)

Alex Sanz

In this Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014 photo, Sue Davis, left, waits to speak during a legislative public meeting , in Charleston, W. Va., about a chemical leak in the Elk River. More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, many residents are not convinced of the water's safety. Davis has lived in Kanawha County for 71 years. She vowed that her faith in the water would never return. She said trusting the authorities won't make the potential risks any less threatening. (AP Photo/ Alex Sanz)

Posted: Monday, February 17, 2014 10:34 am More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

This is Maddox's new routine three times a week, what she considers a necessary burden to feel safe drinking water, cooking with it and making coffee.

For weeks, government officials have said the running water in nine counties is suitable for all daily needs. But Maddox, like many of the 300,000 residents whose water was contaminated Jan. 9, is not convinced.

She notes that officials waited four to 10 days, depending on the neighborhood, before allowing people to use their water. In the days right after Freedom Industries leaked chemicals into the Elk River in Charleston, officials said the water should be used only for flushing toilets and fighting fires.

Residents have struggled to track, let alone trust, mixed messages and muddled information from government officials and Freedom Industries, the company involved. Despite public pressure, officials have been reluctant to call the water "safe" and have started arguing that the term is subjective. Instead, they use phrases such as "appropriate to use."

"Well, they won't use the word 'safe,'" said Maddox, who lives with her two daughters and two grandsons in Charleston. "But, the water is 'OK.' We don't know that."

Maddox is not alone, as visible signs of doubt about the water are everywhere.

In Charleston, eateries display signs that say, "We're cooking with bottled water." The chemical licorice smell still wafts out of some showers, toilets and taps in homes and businesses. The smell resurfaced in five schools Feb. 5 and 6, and the district temporarily shut them down. In one case, a teacher fainted and went to the hospital.

Hours after two of the schools closed Feb. 5, an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave a broad endorsement of the water, saying everyone, pregnant women included, could use it.

Up to that point, pregnant women had received conflicting guidance. Days after thousands of people were cleared to start drinking from faucets, federal officials advised that pregnant women should consider a different source of water.

The nine-county region was cleared to use the water before Freedom Industries revealed that a second chemical, stripped PPH, was in the tank that spilled.

Crude MCHM, the first chemical discovered in the spill, and stripped PPH, are used to clean coal. Little is known about their toxicity, in the short or long term. Neither is considered hazardous by federal standards. Only a handful of studies exist for crude MCHM, and they were on lab animals.

Today, doctors are still advising some patients, such as people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems, to avoid the water on a case-by-case basis, said Kanawha County Health Officer Dr. Rahul Gupta.

Outside water continues to be brought in by tanker trucks and military vehicles, under orders by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration. The public still demands it, Tomblin said.

"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

Last week, Tomblin changed his mind on in-home water testing, which he and other officials showed little interest in before. The inspections are part of a larger study Tomblin ordered that looks into key details that officials relied upon initially to lift the water-use ban.

Tomblin contracted Dr. Andrew Whelton to lead the study. The researcher, based at the University of South Alabama, came to Charleston to study the spill without outside funding. Then he landed a \$50,000 federal grant studying what the chemicals do to pipes in houses. But he had been seeking online donations for return trips to West Virginia to monitor long-term water quality in homes.

Then Tomblin came calling and provided Whelton \$650,000 from the state. With that money, Whelton will sample water in some homes and continue investigating how the chemical permeates or bonds to pipes. Officials have maintained that the chemical doesn't have the right properties to stick around in piping and resurface later.

Whelton also is studying the odor threshold and threat of the chemical. Government experts have long said people can smell the licorice tinge well after the chemical is no longer dangerous in water or vapor. The smell enveloped the valley for days.

Whelton's team also is tasking experts to investigate the CDC's standard for how much of the chemical can be safely ingested in drinking water.

Tomblin's wide-ranging project would need millions more dollars in federal grants. He's calling for that money and, in an effort to re-instill public confidence, for the research team to be able to maintain independence from government officials.

"It is time to let the political officials step aside and let the scientists come in and do the work we need them to do," Tomblin said.

In a region nicknamed "Chemical Valley" because of the industry's huge footprint in greater Charleston, even residents who have lived here their entire lives are concerned.

At a legislative public meeting two weeks ago, several people said they're considering moving. Before the spill, people were already leaving West Virginia at one of the highest rates in the country.

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risks any less threatening.

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Each rash, itch, dry patch of skin or dizzy spell lends doubt for people who shower or brush their teeth in the water. Gupta, the health official, said long-term monitoring is needed to track health conditions that could develop much later because little is known about the chemical's long-term effects.

"People are as angry and as frustrated as they were in the first few days," Gupta said. "It's been a challenge. We are on frontiers unknown. And, the population _ the 300,000 people or so _ continue to suffer." Posted in National on Monday, February 17, 2014 10:34 am. Or, use your linked

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1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Lebanon Daily News - Online, The

In this Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014 photo, water brought in by tankers and military vehicles is seen being distributed, in Charleston, W. Va. A chemical leak in the Elk River left residents wary about using tap water. More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, many residents are not convinced of the water's safety.

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[Return to Top](#)

Researcher still has passion for medical mysteries | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

The Dallas Morning News February 17, 2014 Updated 2 hours ago

DALLAS — Look behind an epidemic and there's a good chance you'll find Dr. Robert Haley crunching numbers to find the causes and cures.

Most physicians advise patients how to avoid or treat illness based on "the medical literature." Haley, the pre-eminent epidemiologist in North Texas, writes the literature.

His is not a household name. Most people will never know how his research has helped them.

Dallas billionaire Ross Perot Sr., who financed Haley's groundbreaking research into the mysterious "Gulf War illnesses," calls him "the guy who gets things done and seeks no recognition."

In 2012, West Nile virus killed 20 Dallas County residents.

Afterward, Haley showed that a "vector index" could forecast the next major West Nile outbreak. The index, a mathematical equation, determines the point at which so many

mosquitoes become infected that they begin spreading the virus to humans.

Using the index, public health officials could determine when they needed to spring into action, Haley said. Early intervention with chemical pesticides could prevent another West Nile epidemic. But only if politics doesn't get in the way.

"The dilemma is whether our community will have the political will to conduct aerial spraying before the cases and deaths mount," he said.

Haley, who is 68, has served as chief of epidemiology at UT Southwestern Medical Center since 1983. As a tenured professor, he is mostly insulated from prevailing political winds. He isn't shy about using his medical degree for social action.

Last year, concerned about exacerbations of asthma and other lung ailments, Haley moved air quality in North Texas to the top of his agenda. He and other physicians lobbied state regulators to curb air pollution from three antiquated coal-fired plants that generate electricity.

Soot from those plants — along with exhaust fumes from cars and trucks — are making some people sick and killing others, Haley warned. So far, state regulators have declined to make the energy industry spend money to clean up the plants or shut them down.

"The power centers that are challenged by real scientific studies defend themselves," Haley said. "I don't hate them. We need those corporate types to go out and bring energy to our homes. Part of the beauty of a free society is that it's a free-for-all."

Haley, in a sense, is a revolutionary. He uses data to turn conventional wisdom on its head. Yet he calmly accepts that many people will continue to embrace conventional wisdom, even after facts disprove it — a realization that would horrify many other scientists.

"I don't get aghast," he said. "I look with wonder at the world."

A lifesaving study

Haley's most far-reaching achievement, a nationwide study on how to control hospital-acquired infections, came early in his career. It has undoubtedly saved thousands of hospital patients and workers from unnecessary illness, even death, over the last 30 years.

As a young epidemiologist at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta — now the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — Haley designed and directed a decade-long study called SENIC, for Study on Efficacy of Nosocomial Infection Control. (Nosocomial is a medical term meaning acquired or occurring in a hospital.)

At the time, in the 1970s, most hospitals followed standardized infection-control procedures. They relied, to a large extent, on the good intentions of doctors, nurses and cleaning crews. Very few institutions tracked infection rates in various areas — operating suites, intensive care units, maternity wards. But new technology was making it easier to gather and analyze data with computers.

Haley's study suggested that hospitals could do certain things to dramatically reduce the spread of disease: hire an infection control officer, develop software to produce regular "scorecards" on infection rates and feed the data back to doctors and nurses so they could improve patient care.

The "best practices" that sprang from his landmark CDC study created a movement that became a mandate. Medicare and the Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation now require hospitals to meet standards that Haley and his team developed three decades ago.

"SENIC really gave a jump-start to infection control that put the United States in the lead worldwide," said Dr. Robert P. Gaynes, who worked for Haley at CDC. "It remains a unique medical study. In my view, it made Bob's career."

After a decade in Atlanta, Haley came home to Dallas to join the UT Southwestern medical school faculty in 1983. Now, 42 years into his career, he has no desire to retire.

"I'll probably work till I drop," he said. "I've got the most interesting job in the world. As long as my brain power holds out, I have a lot to teach young researchers."

Gulf War illness

Army Col. William J. Davis III, now 63 and retired, was a respected Special Forces officer during the Persian Gulf War in 1990-91.

Davis went to war fit and healthy. He returned with short-term memory loss, muscle pain and weakness, constant fevers and a sensitivity to light. At first, he thought he'd had a stroke.

Davis wasn't alone. About 700,000 Americans were deployed in the first Gulf War. When 150,000 of them came home complaining of mysterious ailments, military doctors told them all the same story: It was post-traumatic stress.

"It's very hard not being believed, being told it's all in your head," Davis said. "It's hard to take."

Ross Perot, an indefatigable supporter of the military, heard the stories about sick veterans living in misery with no hope of a real diagnosis or treatment.

"It was obvious that these men had been wounded," Perot recalled in an interview with The Dallas Morning News (<http://dallasne.ws/1j4O9tl>). "I took it to Haley, and he agreed to do the research."

Over the last 18 years, Haley and a team of researchers have amassed a body of medical evidence showing that exposure to chemicals used in the war — and not stress — was responsible for the symptoms troubling Davis and thousands of others. Finally, veterans had an answer that made sense.

"I never thought it would feel so good to find out how screwed up I am," Davis said. "Robert has this amazing ability to cut through the crap. For almost 20 years, he has stayed the course and kept trying to find answers."

U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas joined the search for truth about Gulf War illness more than a decade ago. The Dallas Republican, who has since retired, engineered a five-year, \$75 million congressional earmark for UT Southwestern to support Haley's research into what happened to the veterans.

That didn't sit well with bureaucrats in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"When that money hit, the VA — the civil service guys — just hated me," Haley recalled. "If Sen. Hutchison could send money to someone who was not a VA-approved investigator, then 49 other senators could do the same thing. They were very threatened."

When he began his research, Haley neither accepted nor rejected the conventional wisdom that Gulf War veterans were suffering from post-traumatic stress.

But time and again, his tests on their brains and central nervous systems pointed to chemical exposure as the culprit. Haley found that some veterans had inhaled sarin, a nerve gas, when a munitions dump exploded in Iraq. Others were exposed to pesticides. Still others had received vaccines intended to protect them from nerve gas attacks.

The Gulf War was portrayed by its supporters as a perfect victory: Wham, bam and Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, who had invaded Kuwait, was sent packing back to Baghdad. By insisting on researching the physiological causes of Gulf War illness, Haley and his ilk threatened that made-for-TV image of a glorious, short and sweet triumph. In the doctor's version of history, things hadn't gone so well for the U.S. troops sent to fight the war.

In 2009, the Department of Veterans Affairs canceled Haley's research contract — the one Hutchison had steered to UT Southwestern — because of what it alleged were "persistent noncompliance and numerous performance deficiencies." Several years earlier, another government agency had cooked up allegations that Haley had violated ethical rules on medical research. There were warnings that not just Haley's contract

but all federal grants to UT Southwestern were at risk.

"To make a long story short," Perot recalled, "the government called the medical school and threatened to stop all government funding. Dr. Haley and UT Southwestern were under tremendous pressure not to do the research. But they kept on."

Eventually, the issues between Haley and the feds were resolved. And he is now a hero to Davis and other veterans.

"The first word that comes to mind is 'courage,'" Davis said. "God only knows what would have happened if I had not met Dr. Haley."

Oak Cliff roots

Haley's father and grandfather were doctors. Two uncles were doctors. His three brothers are doctors. Two of his three children are doctors.

He is proud of his family's accomplishments, but if there is any show-off in him, it's not apparent in his lifestyle.

In his driveway sits a silver 2006 Toyota Camry with 100,000 miles on it. He and his wife, Stephanie, have been married for 45 years. Having raised three children, they're now empty nesters rattling around in a 3,700-square-foot North Dallas home.

Haley knows he could have earned much more money had he gone into private practice instead of scientific research.

"We do all right. How much money do you really need to live?" he said.

After earning his medical degree from UT Southwestern in 1971, he worked at Parkland Memorial Hospital for a couple of years, then headed off to the CDC in Atlanta.

His pioneering work there on controlling hospital-acquired infections earned good reviews. In 1983, UT Southwestern invited Haley to return to Dallas to teach, conduct research and see patients. He and Stephanie decided that this was where they would raise a family.

"It just all came together," Haley said.

'Check your work'

Dr. Paul Fischer didn't have a clue about how to gather and analyze data for an epidemiological study. His specialty was internal medicine. His job was to see patients.

In 1991, Fischer noticed an abnormal rate of hepatitis C, a viral liver infection, among

his patients. To him, it looked like an epidemic. He wasn't sure what was causing it. So he went to see Haley, who became his collaborator and mentor. They developed a 70-question patient survey to explore different variables. Fischer gathered information from 600 patients and carefully entered the information into a database.

"Did you check your work?" Haley asked him.

"I'm very careful," Fischer replied, a bit defensively.

"That's great," Haley said. "Now go back and check your work."

Fischer found a 10 percent error rate in his data entries.

When it came time to write a software program to analyze the data, Fischer hoped Haley would do it. Instead, the mentor handed his apprentice a stack of programming manuals.

"So I learned how to write code," Fischer said. "Very few internists know how to do that."

Their study identified tattooing as the top cause of hepatitis C's spread through Dallas in the 1990s. Intravenous drug use, heavy drinking and accidental needle sticks were known causes of hep C. The tattoo thing was new.

As Haley expected, other scientists began poking holes in the study, questioning its design and methodology.

"This did not faze Robert in the least," Fischer said. "It bothered me a lot. But now, finally, this year the CDC has acknowledged tattoos as a factor."

More than a decade later, Fischer uses the skills he learned from Haley to gather data on patients, enter it into customized software programs and analyze it quickly to diagnose and treat illnesses.

"I am living off Robert's wisdom," he said. "Every bit of what I do came from him because he made me learn to program. Thank God he is here for the benefit of the rest of us."

Information from: The Dallas Morning News, <http://www.dallasnews.com>

[Return to Top](#)

**Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
WICU/WSEE - TV - Online**

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SOURCE Trans Energy, Inc.

ST. MARYS, W.Va. , Feb. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG), announced today that Chairman Steve Lucado and President John Corp will present at EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 on Wednesday, February 19, 2014 . The conference will be held at the Omni Hotel in San Francisco, California . Trans Energy's presentation begins at 10:55 a.m (PST) and will be webcast live. The webcast of the Trans Energy, Inc. presentation can be accessed via the Trans Energy, Inc. website located at: www.transenergyinc.com .

The Trans Energy management team will also be available on Tuesday, February 18 th and Wednesday, February 19 th prior to their presentation for one-on-one investor meetings. Investment community professionals interested in scheduling a one-on-one investor meeting with management should contact Brian Brooks at EnerCom, Inc. (303) 296-8834 or Bbrooks@enercominc.com

Additional information regarding Trans Energy, including maps, investor presentations, news releases and videos can be found at the Company's new website www.transenergyinc.com . Trans Energy will regularly update information on the website to provide investors with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations.

About Trans Energy, Inc.

Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale oil and gas exploration and development company, headquartered in the Appalachian Basin.

Further information can be found on the Company's website at www.transenergyinc.com .

Forward-looking statements in this release do not constitute guarantees of future performance. Such forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause our actual results to differ materially from those anticipated. Forward-looking statements in this document include statements regarding the Company's exploration, drilling and development plans and the Company's expectations regarding the timing and success of such programs. Factors that could cause or contribute to such differences include, but are not limited to, fluctuations in the prices of oil and gas, uncertainties inherent in estimating quantities of oil and gas reserves and projecting

future rates of production and timing of development activities, competition, operating risks, acquisition risks, liquidity and capital requirements, the effects of governmental regulation, adverse changes in the market for the Company's oil and gas production, dependence upon third-party vendors, and other risks detailed in the Company's periodic report filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. For a more detailed discussion of the risks and uncertainties of our business, please refer to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012 filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We assume no obligation to update any forward-looking information contained in this press release or with respect to the announcements described herein.

Company contact:
Steve Lucado
304-684-7053
www.transenergyinc.com

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[Return to Top](#)

Wood pellet stoves help some stave off rising heating costs | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Centre Daily Times - Online

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel February 17, 2014

MILWAUKEE — Steve Schutz of New Berlin knows how frustrated people can get when their heating bills soar and they have only one choice of heating fuel, such as propane, which has tripled in price in recent weeks.

Schutz, owner of Sunnyslope Gardens Inc., lowered his heating bill between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a year by installing wood pellet stoves in his greenhouses and home nine years ago.

Now the stoves are his primary heating source, supplemented by natural gas.

Every morning, Schutz checks his stoves and empties the ash pots. It takes him about an hour to make the rounds for six stoves before he leaves them unattended.

"There is a learning curve. You're dealing with fire, so you have check things," he said.

A lot of people appear to be lining up for that learning curve, especially in rural areas, where they've faced propane shortages as well as rising prices.

National trade groups say sales of pellets and pellet stoves are climbing this year, the

result of a winter people are likely to remember for decades.

Dejno's Inc., a pellet manufacturer in Kenosha, Wis., has seen its business heat up as more people turn to pellet stoves and dial back their propane use.

The Kenosha mill takes sawdust and shavings from companies in the home construction industry and presses those waste materials into pellets.

It keeps the waste out of landfills and is a renewable source of homegrown energy, said Larry Dejno, company vice president.

Wisconsin has a keen interest in wood pellets and pellet stoves, as about five mills in the state produce the fuel. The U.S. Forest Products Laboratory in Madison conducts research on pellet fuels, and pellet stove manufacturers have used Wisconsin labs to test their products.

Earth Sense Energy Systems, in the Outagamie County town of Dale Wis., claims to be the nation's largest pellet stove dealership.

"Sales are much stronger than average now, driven by high propane costs more so than the cold," said Chad Curtis, operations manager for the company, which has been in the pellet stove business for 22 years.

The stoves burn compacted pellets, usually made of wood, but some models can burn nutshells, corn kernels and small wood chips. They're more convenient to operate than ordinary wood stoves or fireplaces, and some have much higher heating efficiencies, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

A stove rated at 60,000 Btu can heat a 2,000-square-foot home, while a stove rated at 42,000 Btu can heat a 1,300-square-foot space, the agency says.

What most homeowners want to know is how much money they could save from heating with a pellet stove compared with using propane, fuel oil or natural gas.

With propane priced at more than \$4 a gallon, an equivalent amount of heat from wood pellets would be about five times cheaper, according to Mark Knaebe, forest products technologist with the USDA Forest Products Laboratory.

"It's a no-brainer for propane and fuel oil users. You would want to switch over to a good wood system," Knaebe said.

For someone heating with natural gas, the savings wouldn't amount to much, Knaebe said. That could change, though, if natural gas prices were to increase considerably, as they have in the past.

When propane and fuel oil prices rise, so do pellet stove sales.

The best time to buy a stove and pellets is in the summer, when people have forgotten about heating costs and stove dealerships want to clear out inventory from the previous winter.

Stove prices vary widely, from about \$1,200 to \$4,000, plus installation and other costs that could include a higher home insurance premium for having a wood burner. The cost of pellets is about \$4 per 40-pound bag, with many homeowners using a bag a day to heat their homes or supplement another source of heat.

Most of the stoves don't need an expensive chimney. Free-standing units resemble a conventional wood stove and generally heat a single room well. But they won't heat adjacent areas unless there's a fan to move the warm air between rooms.

The stoves have a fuel hopper to store the pellets until they're needed for burning. Most hoppers hold 35 to 130 pounds of fuel.

A feeder device, like a large screw, drops a few pellets at a time into a combustion chamber for burning. How quickly the pellets are fed into the burner determines the heat output.

The stoves have to be cleaned by the homeowner, including emptying a pot that holds the ashes. They also require electricity to run fans, controls and pellet feeders. Under normal usage, a stove would use about \$9 worth of electricity a month, according to the Department of Energy.

"Unless the stove has a backup power supply, the loss of electric power results in no heat and possibly some smoke in the house," the agency says.

Many people use a pellet stove to supplement or replace their main heating source until propane, natural gas or fuel oil prices go down. For comparison purposes, the Forest Products Laboratory has a fuel-cost calculator on its website, www.fpl.fs.fed.us.

The current propane crisis is a reminder that it's smart to have two ways to heat your home, said John Crouch, spokesman for the Pellet Fuels Institute in Sacramento, Calif.

"It gives you some independence. When you have only one way to heat your home, you're stuck with whatever that fuel price is," he said.

Pellet stoves and wood burning stoves can vary widely in efficiency and operating costs. Outdoor wood "boilers" are inefficient and produce a lot of air pollution, Knaebe said.

"It's almost worse than a campfire," he said.

Starting in 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency wants to reduce pollution from

new wood stoves, wood boilers, fireplaces and pellet stoves used for heating.

The proposed rules would not affect units already in place but would restrict sales of new products to those that emit about 80 percent less pollution than older models.

The changes shouldn't affect pellet stoves because they emit less particulate matter, carbon monoxide and organic compounds than wood burners.

The stoves produce very little air pollution, according to the Department of Energy.

[Return to Top](#)

Upper Bucks Superfund deal reached | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Morning Call - Online

Decades after it dumped toxic waste in Upper Bucks, a leading chemical company has finally paid for the damage.

This month, W.R. Grace & Co. paid more than \$63 million to the government to resolve claims for environmental cleanups at 39 sites across 21 states.

The payout was under the Maryland-based company's bankruptcy plan of reorganization, according to the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency .

One of those sites is the Watson Johnson landfill in Richland Township, which is on 32 acres of a 56-acre property on East Pumping Station Road, just outside Quakertown.

"Communities across the United States will benefit from this payment of present and future cleanup costs," said Robert G. Dreher, acting assistant attorney general for the Environment and Natural Resources Division, in a Feb. 5 written statement. "The Justice Department is committed to holding polluters responsible for their environmental legacy, and won't just walk away leaving taxpayers to pick up the tab."

Richland's Watson Johnson landfill was active from the late 1950s until the early 1970s, accepting industrial and municipal waste.

Hazardous substances were found in the soil and in nearby wells. These substances include trichloroethylene, a potential cancer-causing contaminant. TCE is a colorless liquid with a sweet odor that was used mainly as a solvent to remove grease from metal parts and as an ingredient in adhesives, paint removers and other products.

Drinking or breathing high levels of TCE may cause nervous system effects, liver and lung damage, abnormal heartbeat, coma and possible death. The TCE levels at the

Watson Johnson site were found to be 200 to 300 parts per billion. The federal maximum contaminant level is 5 parts per billion.

In 2001, Watson Johnson was declared a Superfund site. The federal program oversees the cleanup of abandoned hazardous waste sites.

In 2011, the EPA capped the landfill and injected the groundwater with agents to reduce the hazardous chemicals as part of a \$10 million environmental cleanup of the Watson Johnson site. EPA officials estimate it could take 15 to 20 years for the groundwater to return to a safe level.

Richland Township has not spent significant dollars regarding this project, said Richland Water Authority Executive Director Tim Arnold, who also serves as a Richland supervisor.

"As a township, we're happy," Arnold said of the EPA's handling of the cleanup.

Ten years ago, the owners of approximately 35 homes that surround the landfill were offered public water line installations. The EPA continues to monitor test wells in and around the site, and there has been no further threat of contamination, said Arnold.

W.R. Grace, a global supplier of specialty chemicals, and 61 affiliated companies filed for bankruptcy in April 2001. In 2003, the EPA filed claims against the company to recover past and future cleanup costs at sites contaminated by asbestos and other hazardous substances. The bulk of the \$63 million payment will reimburse the EPA for cleanup costs or provide funds for future cleanup at the Superfund sites.

[Return to Top](#)

Marburger squares off against Metcalfe | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Cranberry Eagle - Online

ADAMS TWP — Gordon Marburger is hoping to unseat state Rep. Daryl Metcalfe, R-12th.

"I feel I am the better person to help steer our state in a better direction," Marburger, 57, of Adams Township said.

He will run against Metcalfe in the May 20 Republican primary election.

Marburger said Metcalfe seems to be too involved with state and even national issues, and does not seem to be focused on the district or its constituents.

He feels that improvements to the Route 228 corridor, as well as Freedom and

Rochester roads, have been “stranded.” He said that Route 228, with all of its development, needs to be four lanes. Bridges and other infrastructure also need improvements.

“It’s just fallen off the edge,” Marburger said.

He said that the increase in tax on gasoline, which was passed by the legislature in November and will go to improve roads, will help. Metcalfe, he noted, did not support the plan.

“What do you have to replace it?” Marburger said.

He wants to restore Glade Run Lake in Middlesex Township, which was drained in 2011 after its dam was found to be faulty. Metcalfe has said that he does not support state dollars being used to fix the lake.

“When he said that, that kind of started the fire,” Marburger said.

He wants to improve public education, and change how it is funded. Marburger said the state should stop sending more money to schools where students have low grades and instead fund schools more equally. He also would support moving away from funding schools using property taxes and go toward using earned income taxes instead.

He said he also supports the development of Marcellus Shale natural gas, and feels there should be more education for jobs in that field.

“It’s going to bring the jobs,” Marburger said.

Additionally, he supports local zoning control rather than state control for gas drilling.

Marburger said he wants to create new jobs and support the economy. On Wednesday, Verizon announced that it would be moving 1,000 jobs out of Cranberry Township and Warrendale. If he already were in office, Marburger said he would have tried to find a way to keep the jobs in the area.

Marburger said a lot of tax money from district residents that goes to Harrisburg ends up being used in other parts of the state rather than coming back to the 12th District.

“It almost seems that for every \$2 that goes out, \$1 comes back,” Marburger said.

He said he feels Metcalfe does not adequately fight to bring money or grants back to the district.

Marburger said he is anti-abortion and pro-Second Amendment, but those would not be his entire agenda.

If he is elected, he said that he only would like to serve eight years. If he cannot accomplish his goals in that time, he said it would be time for someone else to take office.

“Being a career politician isn't my goal,” Marburger said.

Also, if he is elected, he said he will not take a state pension or per diems.

When campaigning, he plans on going door to door, and attending municipal meetings. He feels that is the best way to learn more about the district and be visible to voters.

He has served on the Mars School Board since 2006. Both his mother and his grandfather served on the school board in the past. He also serves on the boards of the Butler County Vocational-Technical School and Butler County Community College.

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[Return to Top](#)

Public forum slated on sewage upgrade | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Cranberry Eagle - Online

CRANBERRY TWP — The township on Wednesday will have an open house to provide residents with information about the proposed Brush Creek sewage treatment plant expansion.

Township manager Jerry Andree said officials have been working on the project for

more than a year and a half.

They've compiled seven options for the facility's renovation, options that range from \$54 million to \$68 million.

Residents from 1 to 8 p.m. Wednesday can see each option in detail and will be able to question officials about them.

The open house will be in the council chambers at the municipal center on Rochester Road.

Andree said the need for renovations at the facility is twofold. First are new regulations handed down by the state Department of Environmental Protection that require Cranberry to upgrade its facilities.

"Every five years we need to get a new operating permit from the state, and we know what they're telling us in terms of what we need to change to meet those requirements," Andree said. "Those new standards are hitting us now."

He said those standards mostly concern the plant's rate of flow and its ability to deal with peak water levels.

The township will need a new operating permit in 2017, Andree said, which is one reason officials have been working to move the project forward.

According to Andree, township officials want to have the project bid out to contractors by early next year. They are targeting 2017 as a projected completion date.

Another reason for the plant's expansions is population growth. There are more than 30,000 residents now, Andree said, and that number is expected to climb past 50,000 by 2030.

The Brush Creek facility is more than 15 years old and can treat more than 4.5 million gallons of water each day. Under the new state requirements, Cranberry will be forced to increase that capacity.

[Return to Top](#)

Jim Hillibish: A Midge was the sweetest car on Earth - when it ran | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Carbondale News - Online

I spotted a '72 MG Midget recently. My hand reached for my headlight flasher. Old MG pilots die hard. Flashing lights was the international symbol of brotherhood among MG drivers. After I bought a new '72, I learned flashing was a symbol of pity. The

Midge was all cherried up. I imagine the driver bought a derelict in a barn for \$100 and dumped 20 grand into the resurrection. When I found true love for \$1,600 in 1972 at Checkered Flag Sports Cars, the salesman asked if I was handy with garage tools. "She takes a little work," he said. Imagine trying to sell a car that way today. My Morris Group Midget was in a line of diminutive British cars with "little" names: the Morris Minor and the lately reprised Mini Cooper. I loved my Midget, but... It was the smallest vehicle this side of bicycles. The contortionist cockpit felt like you were sitting below the roadway. Bus axles were above eye level. Tractor-trailer rigs could pass over the car, taking off the windscreen but nothing else, if you ducked. Despite this, the Midget was one cool roadster. The high-rev gearbox, when the clutch wasn't slipping, was pure joy. Fourth rocketed you to 80. Speeding tickets barely fit in the glove box. The two-seater Midget began in the 1920s on a Morris Minor frame. It always was a borrowed car. In '61, the Austin-Healy Sprite MK II, another "baby" car, was rebadged as the new Midget. In '65, the Midge received a motor from the Cooper. It looked like a sewing machine. My '72 was a keeper. It was the last Midget with thin, useless chrome bumpers. Soon, import versions arrived with ugly, thick-rubber bangers, a futile attempt to meet U.S. crash standards. The Midget died in '79, not enough room under the bonnet for air-pollution gear. Midgets needed three little wipers. The windshield was too small for two standard ones. When I ran out of small talk on dates, I turned on the trio. They entranced women. Still, the roof leaked even in drizzly weather. My Midge took constant tweaking. As with most British cars, the electrical system was iffy. On foggy days, the spark plugs fouled. You pulled and wiped before starting. High-torque revving busted the clutch. The starter went. The radio was useless (not enough punch to overcome the engine "voice"). The car was so light, two guys could pick it up. There was so much torque on the rear wheels, they spun out on snow. I cried when I sold it. It fetched \$2,800 from a collector, the only time I ever made money on a car. When I saw that Midge, I forgot its testy travails. All I remember is top-down country roads at 70 mph, downshifting and groovin' the "rummm, rummm, rummm" of the world's sweetest gearbox. The driver flashed me back and waved as my memories spun out of control.

Page 2 of 2 - Reach Jim at 330-580-8324 or jim.hillibish@cantonrep.com. On Twitter: [@jhillibishREP](https://twitter.com/jhillibishREP).

[Return to Top](#)

Marburger squares off against Metcalfe | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Butler Eagle - Online

Marburger

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[Return to Top](#)

The Chevron Guarantee: Our well won't explode...or your pizza is free! | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
philly.com

, 5:27 PM googleon: snippet-- Last Tuesday, the residents of the small rural community of Bobtown in the far southwestern corner of Pennsylvania woke up to a horrible shock the sound of a massive explosion in their backyards. The source of the blast and the intensely hot fire that followed was a Chevron fracking well that had been set to begin production, but instead shot orange flames high into the air and gave off loud hissing sounds that could be heard hundreds of yards away.

John Kuis, 57, of nearby Dilliner told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that at 6:45 a.m., his dog growled, then the earth rumbled, and finally: "Then the house just sort of shook and there was a big loud bang." Another neighbor told the paper that the fracking explosion "sounded like a jet engine going 5 feet above your house."

It was a horrific event on every letter. One worker at the rig was not found and is presumed dead. The fire -- who posed enormous risks to rescue workers and to the surrounding community -- burned intensely for five days before it was finally extinguished. Despite reassurances, neighbors surely worried whether toxins were released in the fiery aftermath.

Of course, living near a fracking rig in Pennsylvania -- the state that Gov. Corbett has promised will become "the Texas of natural gas" -- isn't a picnic under the best of circumstances; scores of neighbors have complained about polluted drinking water or foul odors or ailing pets and livestock, of headaches and nausea and skin rashes. But the people of Bobtown who endured the Chevron blast got a sweet -- or rather savory -- consolation prize for all that agita.

Pizza, pizza!. OK. actually just...pizza.

Local residents were delivered a note (pictured above), dated Sunday, from the Chevron Community Outreach Team. It states in part:

Chevron recognizes the effect this has had on the community. We value being a responsible member of this community and will continue to strive to achieve incident-free operations. We are committed to taking action to safeguard our neighbors, our employees, our contractors and the environment Tucked inside the envelope was a gift certificate to Bobtown Pizza, courtesy of Chevron. It entitles the resident to a free large pizza, and before you say something like, Boy, is that chintzy, you should know that was just the beginning, that the coupon also entitles the holder to a 2-liter soda.

Is there a catch? Well, sort of the certificate is good for a "special combo only." Remember, Chevron's yearly profits declined in 2013 and . You weren't really expected pepperoni, too, were you? (Note: the pizza certificates were first reported by No Fracking Way and Raging Chicken Press -- I called (!!)) the pizza shop and confirmed

that about 100 of the certificates were distributed by Chevron.)

Of course, a cynic would argue that a lifetime supply of pizza -- even with those cheesy breadsticks thrown in -- wouldn't be worth the health risks of having a massive fracking rig next door. On the other hand, I see a possible new marketing campaign for Chevron: We guarantee your fracking rig won't explode, or your pizza is free! AD

UNIT-- 0 comments

[Return to Top](#)

Jim Hillibish: A Midge was the sweetest car on Earth - when it ran | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Villager - Online, The

I spotted a '72 MG Midget recently. My hand reached for my headlight flasher. Old MG pilots die hard. Flashing lights was the international symbol of brotherhood among MG drivers. After I bought a new '72, I learned flashing was a symbol of pity. The Midge was all cherried up. I imagine the driver bought a derelict in a barn for \$100 and dumped 20 grand into the resurrection. When I found true love for \$1,600 in 1972 at Checkered Flag Sports Cars, the salesman asked if I was handy with garage tools. "She takes a little work," he said. Imagine trying to sell a car that way today. My Morris Group Midget was in a line of diminutive British cars with "little" names: the Morris Minor and the lately reprised Mini Cooper. I loved my Midget, but... It was the smallest vehicle this side of bicycles. The contortionist cockpit felt like you were sitting below the roadway. Bus axles were above eye level. Tractor-trailer rigs could pass over the car, taking off the windscreen but nothing else, if you ducked. Despite this, the Midget was one cool roadster. The high-rev gearbox, when the clutch wasn't slipping, was pure joy. Fourth rocketed you to 80. Speeding tickets barely fit in the glove box. The two-seater Midget began in the 1920s on a Morris Minor frame. It always was a borrowed car. In '61, the Austin-Healy Sprite MK II, another "baby" car, was rebadged as the new Midget. In '65, the Midge received a motor from the Cooper. It looked like a sewing machine. My '72 was a keeper. It was the last Midget with thin, useless chrome bumpers. Soon, import versions arrived with ugly, thick-rubber bangers, a futile attempt to meet U.S. crash standards. The Midget died in '79, not enough room under the bonnet for air-pollution gear. Midgets needed three little wipers. The windshield was too small for two standard ones. When I ran out of small talk on dates, I turned on the trio. They entranced women. Still, the roof leaked even in drizzly weather. My Midge took constant tweaking. As with most British cars, the electrical system was iffy. On foggy days, the spark plugs fouled. You pulled and wiped before starting. High-torque revving busted the clutch. The starter went. The radio was useless (not enough punch to overcome the engine "voice"). The car was so light, two guys could pick it up. There was so much torque on the rear wheels, they spun out on snow. I cried when I sold it. It fetched \$2,800 from a collector, the only time I ever made money on a car. When I saw that Midge, I forgot its testy travails. All I remember is top-down country roads at 70 mph, downshifting and groovin' the "rummm, rummm,

rummm” of the world’s sweetest gearbox. The driver flashed me back and waved as my memories spun out of control.

Page 2 of 2 - Reach Jim at 330-580-8324 or jim.hillibish@cantonrep.com. On Twitter: @jhillibishREP.

[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Centre Daily Times - Online

The Associated PressFebruary 17, 2014 Updated 14 minutes ago

In this Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014 photo, Sue Davis, left, waits to speak during a legislative public meeting , in Charleston, W. Va., about a chemical leak in the Elk River. More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, many residents are not convinced of the water's safety. Davis has lived in Kanawha County for 71 years. She vowed that her faith in the water would never return. She said trusting the authorities won't make the potential risks any less threatening. ALEX SANZ — AP Photo

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

This is Maddox's new routine three times a week, what she considers a necessary burden to feel safe drinking water, cooking with it and making coffee.

For weeks, government officials have said the running water in nine counties is suitable for all daily needs. But Maddox, like many of the 300,000 residents whose water was contaminated Jan. 9, is not convinced.

She notes that officials waited four to 10 days, depending on the neighborhood, before allowing people to use their water. In the days right after Freedom Industries leaked chemicals into the Elk River in Charleston, officials said the water should be used only for flushing toilets and fighting fires.

Residents have struggled to track, let alone trust, mixed messages and muddled information from government officials and Freedom Industries, the company involved. Despite public pressure, officials have been reluctant to call the water "safe" and have started arguing that the term is subjective. Instead, they use phrases such as "appropriate to use."

"Well, they won't use the word 'safe,'" said Maddox, who lives with her two daughters and two grandsons in Charleston. "But, the water is 'OK.' We don't know that."

Maddox is not alone, as visible signs of doubt about the water are everywhere.

In Charleston, eateries display signs that say, "We're cooking with bottled water." The chemical licorice smell still wafts out of some showers, toilets and taps in homes and businesses. The smell resurfaced in five schools Feb. 5 and 6, and the district temporarily shut them down. In one case, a teacher fainted and went to the hospital.

Hours after two of the schools closed Feb. 5, an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave a broad endorsement of the water, saying everyone, pregnant women included, could use it.

Up to that point, pregnant women had received conflicting guidance. Days after thousands of people were cleared to start drinking from faucets, federal officials advised that pregnant women should consider a different source of water.

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Today, doctors are still advising some patients, such as people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems, to avoid the water on a case-by-case basis, said Kanawha County Health Officer Dr. Rahul Gupta.

Outside water continues to be brought in by tanker trucks and military vehicles, under orders by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration. The public still demands it, Tomblin said.

"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

Last week, Tomblin changed his mind on in-home water testing, which he and other officials showed little interest in before. The inspections are part of a larger study Tomblin ordered that looks into key details that officials relied upon initially to lift the water-use ban.

Tomblin contracted Dr. Andrew Whelton to lead the study. The researcher, based at the University of South Alabama, came to Charleston to study the spill without outside funding. Then he landed a \$50,000 federal grant studying what the chemicals do to pipes in houses. But he had been seeking online donations for return trips to West

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[Return to Top](#)

Associated Press February 17, 2014 Updated 14 minutes ago

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State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers at an oversight hearing that he spoke with the governor before his agency used its regulatory authority to intervene in lawsuits filed by a coalition of environmental groups under the federal Clean Water Act.

"When I went to brief Gov. McCrory about the initiation of those suits, he said two things," Skvarla recounted. "He said protect the environment, and do the right thing."

But Skvarla maintains he never told McCrory, a Republican who worked for Duke for 28 years, about the proposed terms of the settlement negotiated by his agency.

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Federal prosecutors served Skvarla's agency and Duke with grand jury subpoenas demanding records as part of a federal investigation into the spill, which contaminated the river so badly public health officials advised against prolonged contact with the water or eating fish.

The state announced Monday that it will begin testing for contaminants in John H. Kerr Reservoir in Virginia, roughly 80 miles downstream from the spill site, after layers of gray ash were seen on the surface.

McCrory has maintained close ties to Duke since leaving the company to launch his first campaign for governor in 2008.

Campaign finance reports show Duke Energy, its political action committee, executives and their immediate families have donated at least \$1.1 million to McCrory's campaign and affiliated groups that spent money on TV ads, mailings and events to support him.

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McCrory said Friday that he sees no conflict of interest in his role as elected official and corporate shareholder.

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[Return to Top](#)

Police still awaiting access to well pad | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Herald-Standard - Online

State police confirmed Monday that they are still awaiting access to the Chevron gas well site in Dunkard Township, Greene County, and that the identity of a missing worker as a result of the explosion and fire at the site is being withheld until investigators are able to process the scene.

“Although the fire is contained, the site itself (meaning the platform where the explosion occurred) has yet to be deemed safe for access. Crews are continuing to remove equipment in preparation for securing the tanks but we do not have free access as of yet,” Trooper Stefani Plume said.

Plume said that it remains unclear when police will gain access to the site.

“We have been given no indication from Chevron or its contracted companies at the scene as to when this will occur or when we can continue our investigation,” Plume said. “Until we can gain access and determine if the missing person is, in fact, there, we are not releasing any names at this point.”

She said that police are ready to initiate their investigation as soon as it is deemed possible.

“(We) intend to do this as quickly as we possibly can but that depends on when we actually gain access to the scene as well as how long it takes to find the missing worker and confirm identity. We would never want to assume that the information given to us is correct and release misinformation,” Plume said.

Chevron officials reported Sunday that the fire had self-extinguished Saturday afternoon.

The fire began at 6:45 a.m. Feb. 11, when an explosion rocked the Lanco 7H Marcellus shale well pad and resulted in a fire that burned for about four days.

The missing worker has been identified by a Texas company as one of its employees. Cameron International is based in Houston and is a flow specialist company for gas wells.

“At this time, we cannot comment on the status of the unaccounted for colleague,” said Chevron spokeswoman Lee Ann Wainwright. “This is a subject of an ongoing Pennsylvania state police investigation, and, out of respect for their jurisdiction, all questions regarding the missing person will be handled by them.”

Wainwright said before the well intervention equipment work can commence, a crane that was burned as a result of the incident must be removed from the site. She said the crane was in the line of fire and is badly damaged, so special equipment was brought in to assist with its removal. Wainwright said the removal of the crane is necessary before crews can begin well intervention work.

Wainwright said crews are staging water near the site to prepare for well intervention work and for fire prevention and suppression, if necessary. Ten water storage tanks were delivered and installed on Friday, and more were established over the weekend.

Wainwright said water from these tanks will be used to cool the well site and equipment, if necessary, so the wells can safely be worked on and for potential fire prevention and suppression. The water tanks are being placed on a tank pad that Chevron constructed adjacent to the well pad. Weather permitting, crews hope to source water around the clock. Crews are staging additional response equipment at nearby locations, including the Greene County Fairgrounds, she said.

[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Williamsport Sun-Gazette - Online

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[Return to Top](#)

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Times Leader - Online

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[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, West Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Observer-Reporter - Online

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[Return to Top](#)

Royal mistreatment: The AG should probe Chesapeake's leases | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Online

Pennsylvania property owners who lease their land for natural gas drilling want a couple of things. Feeling like a sucker is not one of them. Yet that's the experience of many northern Pennsylvanians who are doing business with Chesapeake Energy Corp. Although they have allowed the Oklahoma-based company to drill on their property in exchange for the promise of royalty checks and helping the cause of energy independence, they say the firm deducts too many costs from their royalties, sometimes to the point that the charges exceed the amount of the check.

Gov. Tom Corbett and state Sen. Gene Yaw, R-Lycoming County, have heard the complaints and confronted Chesapeake. Last week they asked state Attorney General Kathleen Kane to investigate.

We hope the attorney general, who has jurisdiction over consumer affairs, looks into the claims.

There are thousands of drilling leases in Pennsylvania with assorted companies and Chesapeake is the state's largest driller. The words commonly used by landowners to describe what is happening, Sen. Yaw said, are cheating, stealing and fraud. And Chesapeake has been down this path before.

In September it agreed to pay \$7.5 million to settle a class-action complaint by leaseholders in Pennsylvania who had similar claims that the energy company was making unauthorized deductions from royalty payments for drilling expenses. The agreement, which was filed in U.S. District Court in Scranton, came after two months of negotiations between attorneys under the mediation of a retired federal judge.

Given this new round of complaints, one wonders if Chesapeake learned a lesson. Attorney General Kane must decide if it should be taught another.

[Return to Top](#)

Health Care Heroes | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Risk & Insurance - Online

2014 Power Broker

Health care reform has led to some late nights and intense demands on some Power Broker® winners.

Topics: Affordable Care Act | Brokerage | February 2014 Issue | Health Care | Insurance Industry | Legal/Regulatory

Employees at the national headquarters of the American Legion Auxiliary liked their health insurance plan, but they weren't able to keep it.

Like five million other plans, their health plan was cancelled last year, leaving the Indianapolis-based veterans services organization scrambling to cover its employees.

“Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield did away with all of their small group policies and made new ones,” said Donna Parrott, HR director of the nonprofit organization.

Fortunately for the group, they had Kevin Wiskus, an executive vice president at the Hays Cos., to protect their interests.

Kevin Wiskus

Executive Vice President,

Hays Cos., Indianapolis

Wiskus, a 2014 Power Broker® winner in the Employee Benefits category, was able to find a plan that — ever mindful of the nonprofit organization's fiscal constraints — reduced the organization's health plan costs by about 10 percent, Parrott said.

Wiskus was an area vice president at Gallagher Benefit Services when he put together a benefits solution for the American Legion Auxiliary. And, said Parrott, “it was about 16 percent cheaper than what Anthem recommended.”

“He goes above and beyond,” she said. “We are a small group but he doesn't treat us as a small group. You would think we were his only client the way we get that personal touch.”

Going above and beyond is emblematic of Power Broker® winners in 2014 — and not just those focused on employee benefits plans. (See all industry sector listings of 2014 Power Broker® winners.)

But while Superstorm Sandy focused attention last year on the Power Brokers specializing in property, this year, it's the Affordable Care Act that is taking center stage.

Employee benefits consultants and brokers have had to find ways to dig through 11,000 pages of regulations — regulations that have been changed at the last minute — and excavate the necessary information to protect their clients.

As individuals struggled to sign up via poorly functioning online sites and health care carriers fretted about an adverse risk pool, brokers and consultants stepped in to find solutions.

“It's creating a lot more work for us as consultants to make sure our clients are following all the laws, and making them aware of the taxes and additional costs to them,” said Kim Clark, an account director at Gallagher Benefit Services.

“I am hopeful that 2014 is easier than 2013,” she said. “I can't imagine it getting harder than it was this past year.”

“The carriers had to make changes to every single one of their plans for Jan. 1. Even if employers didn't want to change their health plans, there were plan changes because of health care reform,” said Clark, a 2014 Power Broker® in the Employee Benefits category.

Transitioning Plans

A survey of health insurance brokers by Morgan Stanley found that quarterly-reported year-over-year rates in December 2013 were rising in excess of 6 percent in the small group market, and 9 percent in the individual market, according to an article in Forbes by Dr. Scott Gottlieb, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington think tank.

It is the largest reported increase since the firm started its quarterly surveys of brokers in 2010, he wrote. “Much of the rate increases are attributable to Obamacare.”

Deb Mangels,

Senior Vice President,

ABD Insurance and Financial Services

Thanks to Deb Mangels, senior vice president at ABD Insurance and Financial Services, the results were much more positive — and affordable — at the Piedmont Unified School District.

“It's been an amazing year for us. We have transitioned our health care plans and it's so much more than we have had,” said Michael Brady, assistant superintendent of the district, which employs more than 360 teachers, administrators and support staff in six schools near Oakland, Calif.

Mangels, a 2014 Public Sector Power Broker®, transitioned the district's employee coverage from a health benefits pool with unsustainable cost increases to its own carrier at the same time the district was instituting its first medical benefits cap and increased premiums, following some “very intense labor negotiations,” Brady said.

“They reworked all of the plans,” negotiated a 15-month plan year so all plans would be on the same cycle, and added an online open enrollment tool. For the same benefits as the pool plan, the district's employees pay about \$100 less each month in premiums, he said.

Plus, employees have the option of choosing among some plan options related to copay and deductibles that were not available in the pool.

“I have never felt that we were in a better place than we are right now,” Brady said.

Communication is Key

When one HR director for an oil and gas drilling services company was holding employee meetings to discuss the introduction of a high-deductible plan, she faced resistance.

The materials she used to illustrate the changes were hampering her ability to clearly explain to employees and to foreign corporate parents the company's new health benefit plans and options.

That's when she called James Bernstein, a principal at Mercer and a 2014 Employee Benefits Power Broker® — at midnight that night. He's the consultant she counts on to keep his eye on both the big picture and the gritty details necessary to keep her organization in compliance and on top of everything.

By the time she woke up in the morning, Bernstein had prepared and sent her a new set of PowerPoint slides that offered more clarity on the health benefit plans.

“I really couldn't do this without him,” said the HR director. “I've got 10 balls in the air, and he will make sure I don't drop one of them.”

Effective communication tools and strategies are a crucial part of plan design changes, said Robert Ditty, a partner at Mercer, and a 2014 Employee Benefits Power Broker®.

“You can design a plan until you are blue in the face but if people don't understand it, you will not get the results you want,” he said.

Consumerism Takes Hold

Many plan design changes took place this year with his clients, Ditty said, because employers needed to make changes due to the ACA anyway. As a result, they opted to move ahead with some strategic alternatives that had been under consideration for a while.

One popular option among his mid-size and large company clients was the transition to a high-deductible health plan, coupled with health savings accounts and health reimbursement accounts.

The health care reform law “made people re-evaluate ... and it really expedited that strategy for a substantial portion of clients.”

Analyzing and strategizing around health benefits isn't going to end any time soon.

Robert Ditty

Partner,

Mercer, Atlanta

Ditty's clients are already trying to prepare for a substantial excise tax that kicks in in 2018. That tax — which requires employers to pay a 40 percent tax on health care costs that exceed federally defined thresholds — is better known as a penalty on so-called Cadillac plans. He said, however, that thresholds imposed for the federal tax will fall on “employers who are not offering very generous or rich plans.”

Instead, as the regulations are now written, they will affect many employers who have older workers and higher health care costs. “A significant portion of my clients are projected to hit this threshold in 2018, and they don't have rich plans,” Ditty said.

That tax will join the other taxes imposed this year on employers. All of these developments have made life interesting of late for employee benefits consultants —

“interesting,” as in the Chinese curse: “May you live in interesting times.”

Budgetary Concerns

It was those additional fees imposed this year that forced Gallagher's Clark to seek out different health plan designs for her clients.

The ACA-imposed taxes — either directly borne by employers or probably passed along as increased premiums because they are paid by health insurers — are the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute Fee (PCORI); a Marketplace User Fee that “could be almost 3 percent of their premium,” Clark said; a Transitional Reinsurance Program Assessment Fee; an Annual Health Insurance Industry Fee; and a Risk Adjustment Program and Fee.

Often, she said, employers had to change plan design “to help their budget to account for those additional costs.”

Also adding costs were some other requirements in the ACA, such as requiring pediatric dental benefits on all plans, even if the policyholders did not have children or their children were older than 18.

One other wrinkle in the ACA, which is playing out in the courts, is the need for all plans to include contraception benefits. That offered a unique challenge for Jan Wigen, a principal at Mercer, who was working with a religious institution.

The faith-based organization, a Catholic college, refused to pay for the benefit. Wigen, a 2014 Employee Benefits Power Broker®, helped the college secure separate contraceptive coverage through an insurer without having to pay for it, itself. She then provided separate enrollment cards and communication tools so the college could comply with the law and employees could have the coverage, without administrators breaking the dictates of their faith.

That was a regulation that had a fairly limited employer impact, but there was plenty of fodder in the ACA for angst to be created among employers of all sizes and shapes — and their brokers as well.

“I can't think of an employer I talked to or worked with,” Ditty said, “where the law is not driving them in many instances to be more proactive about how they manage their benefit programs. ... They have really become progressive in what they are doing from a strategic standpoint.”

For those employers lucky enough to have Power Brokers as their consultants, the process will run a bit smoother and the results will likely be a bit better, even as the demands on them increase and the regulations continue to change.

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The Law

Legal Spotlight: February 2014

A look at the latest decisions impacting the industry.

By: Anne Freedman | February 18, 2014 • 6 min read

Topics: 2014 Issues (Parent) | Claims | Construction | Employment Practices | February 2014 Issue | Legal/Regulatory | Liability | Product Liability | Professional Liability | Property

Subrogation Attempt Rejected

St. Paul Mercury Insurance unsuccessfully sought to recover \$14.5 million from a security company after a propane tank exploded in an insured's building.

An Illinois appeals court upheld a summary judgment that had been granted Aargus Security Systems Inc., which provided security for the Mallers Building on South Wabash in Chicago.

A tank of liquefied petroleum — which later was determined to be damaged or defective prior to delivery — had been delivered to a jeweler who rented space in the building.

St. Paul Mercury Insurance, as subrogator for Mallers, claimed the security company was negligent and breached its contract by not stopping or reporting the delivery of the propane tank. The insurer argued that Aargus “knew or should have known” that it was creating “a dangerous condition.”

The contract between the building owner and the security company did not include specific responsibilities regarding the inspection of deliveries.

The Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, rejected the insurer's argument, granting a summary judgment. That court also rejected affidavits from experts, who offered their opinions that appropriate security procedures would not permit delivery of propane tanks. On appeal, the court agreed, ruling that neither expert was part of the contract between the building owner and security company, and that their views on high-rise security were “irrelevant.”

The appeals court upheld the lower court's decision that the security company “never undertook a duty to check on propane tanks” as part of its responsibilities.

Scorecard: St. Paul Mercury Insurance Co. will not recoup the payment of \$14.5

million it paid in claims following an explosion.

Takeaway: A court will not expand a defendant's duties beyond what the parties agreed upon in their contract.

Insurer Need Not Pay for Atrium Collapse Settlement

The U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a summary judgment which allowed ACE American Insurance Co. to reject reimbursement of a \$26 million settlement claim.

The claim resulted from the Sept. 5, 2007 collapse of an 18-story, 2,400 ton glass atrium that was being built as part of a \$900 million Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Oxon Hill, Md. Gaylord hired PTJV, a joint venture between Perini Building Co. and Turner Construction Co., to serve as construction manager.

A year after the collapse of the atrium, PTJV filed a complaint against Gaylord for establishment and enforcement of a mechanic's lien, breach of contract, quantum meruit, and violation of the Maryland Prompt Payment Act. PTJV alleged Gaylord owed it nearly \$80 million. Gaylord countersued for breach of contract and breach of fiduciary duty, seeking reimbursement of about \$65 million due to PTJV's alleged failure to properly manage scheduling and costs, and failing to build a high-quality project at the agreed-upon price.

Gaylord and PTJV agreed to settle the Gaylord action on Nov. 28, 2008, with Gaylord paying an additional \$42.3 million and PTJV crediting back \$26 million. PTJV did not seek ACE's consent prior to entering the settlement agreement, and did not seek reimbursement for the settlement amount until about six months afterward, according to court documents.

ACE denied payment, and PTJV filed suit alleging breach of contract and bad faith. A district court upheld ACE's subsequent motion for a summary judgment because of the lack of prior consent to the settlement, and the appeals court agreed with that decision.

Scorecard: ACE will not need to pay a \$26 million insurance claim, following an insured's settlement of litigation without prior consent.

Takeaway: The decision breaks away from the trend of courts requiring evidence of prejudice when an insurance company denies coverage due to lack of notice.

ERISA Time Limits Upheld

The U.S. Supreme Court denied the petition of a Wal-Mart public relations executive to litigate the denial of long-term disability benefits under the retail store's plan, administered by Hartford Life & Accident Insurance Co.

A unanimous decision of the High Court ruled that Julie Heimeshoff failed to abide by the three year statute of limitations in filing her request for judicial review of the insurance company's denial of benefits.

Although Heimeshoff filed the litigation within three years after the final denial of benefits, she did not file it within three years after “proof of loss,” as was required in the plan documents.

Suffering from lupus and fibromyalgia, Heimeshoff stopped working in June 2005. In August of that year, she filed a claim for long-term disability benefits, listing her symptoms as “extreme fatigue, significant pain, and difficulty in concentration.” That claim was ultimately denied by Hartford when her rheumatologist never responded to requests for additional information.

Hartford later allowed her to reopen the claim without need for an appeal, if the physician provided the requested information. After another physician evaluation and report, Hartford's physician concluded Heimeshoff was able to perform the “activities required by her sedentary occupation.”

In her complaint, which was joined by the U.S. government, Heimeshoff argued the controlling statute should be the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, which provides a two-tier process of internal review and litigation. A district court granted a motion by The Hartford and Wal-Mart to dismiss the lawsuit. That was upheld by the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals. The High Court agreed, ruling the statute of limitations was reasonable and there were no contrary statutes that should control the process.

Scorecard: The Hartford need not pay long-term disability benefits to the employee.

Takeaway: The U.S. Supreme Court's decision resolves a split among various federal appeals courts, some of which had upheld plan provisions and others which found they were not enforceable.

Court Reverses Product Liability Decision

The Pennsylvania Superior Court ruled that Indalex Inc. may pursue coverage from National Union Fire Insurance Co. of Pittsburgh, Pa., reversing a lower court decision that dismissed the case.

Indalex was seeking duty-to-defend coverage from the insurer under a commercial umbrella policy as a result of lawsuits filed in five states alleging the company's doors and windows were defectively designed or manufactured, resulting in water leakage, mold, cracked walls and personal injury.

The trial court ruled there was no obligation to defend or indemnify Indalex as the claims involved “faulty workmanship” and thus did not constitute an “occurrence.” It

dismissed the lawsuit.

On appeal, the higher court found that the underlying claims did count as “occurrences” because the defective products led to damages elsewhere and were “neither expected nor intended from the standpoint of the Insured.”

The court ruled that the lower court improperly ignored legally viable product-liability-based tort claims, rejecting the use of the state's “gist of the action” doctrine, which prevents a “plaintiff from re-casting ordinary breach of contract claims into tort claims.” The case was remanded to the lower court for further action on the claims.

Scorecard: National Union may incur claims up to \$25 million as Indalex defends itself from the underlying lawsuits in five states.

Takeaway: The decision provides an expansive reading of an insurance company's obligations in commercial general liability coverage.

Anne Freedman is managing editor of Risk & Insurance. She can be reached at afreedman@lrp.com

[Return to Top](#)

Community digest | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Citizens' Voice - Online, The

Wyoming Valley

Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition will meet at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the American Legion building, Route 415, Dallas Memorial Highway, Dallas. Among the topics discussed will be the frack waste recycling plant proposed for Lake Township. Public is welcome.

The Wilkes Running Club will hold its annual 100 mile Relay for Heat on Sunday, Feb. 23, to help local families pay their heating bills. Relay starts at 6 a.m. and each participant will run a four mile leg on the levee until the runners collectively have covered 100 miles. Participants will include Wilkes University students, faculty, staff and alumni, along with other members of the community who have expressed an interest in helping. The event will raise funds for CEO's Martin Luther King Fuel Fund to help needy families pay for their fuel bills. Last year, the event raised more than \$2,500 by collecting donations on campus and in the nearby community. Pledges are sought either in an amount per mile covered or a fixed pledge. All contributions will be given to CEO's Martin Luther King Fuel Fund and used exclusively to avert home heating crises. Make checks payable to Wilkes University Running Club, list MLK Fuel Fund on the memo line and send to "Relay for heat" c/o Dr. W. Terzaghi (running

club advisor), Wilkes University, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766. For information, contact Dr. W. Terzaghi (running club adviser) at 570-288-0776 or 570-817-1828, terzaghi@wilkes.edu; Justin Perez, running club president, at 631-487-0892, justin.perez@wilkes.edu, or Vivien Terzaghi at 570-824-2478.

Lithuanian Women's Club of Wyoming Valley Will not meet in February because of the winter weather.

Exeter High School Reunion Planning Committee will meet from 2 to 4 p.m. Feb. 20 at the Avenue Diner. Representatives of all classes are encouraged to attend. For information, call Barbara Russo at 570-654-8670.

The Lunch Bunch of Kingston High School, class of 1946, will meet for lunch at Bo Brothers, Wyoming, at 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21. Those attending who wear the class colors of maroon or gray will receive a gift. All members of the class are welcome.

The District 12 Sons of the American Legion will meet at 2 p.m. March 2 at American Legion Post 609, Hanover Township. Detachment Commander George Flasiński and Vice Commander Joe Faltynowich are scheduled to attend. Agenda will consist of fundraising projects, 2014-15 meeting schedule and regular business. District Commander Ed Derwin will preside. All squadrons are urged to have representation at this special district meeting.

Wyoming Valley Real Estate Investors Association, Landlords Helping Landlords, will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at the 1174 Highway 315, near the casino. Cost is \$10 at the door. Speaker for the evening will be District Attorney Stephanie Salavantis. She will discuss her role in the community and how it can relate to landlords. The WVREIA meets the last Tuesday of each month except for December, June, and July. The meetings range from one to two hours depending on the speakers and the topics, with a different speaker each meeting. Refreshments will be served. Meetings cost \$10 at the door or dues of \$60 yearly. Call 570-240-6475 for information.

The Big Band Society of Northeastern Pa. will hold a dinner dance March 7 at Genetti's Hotel and Convention Center, Wilkes-Barre. This event is for members only. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. Dinner is at 6:30. Music will be by the Continentals. For reservations, call Glen at 570-586-5359 or Herman at 570-654-6454. Herman Castellani will preside.

The Fourth annual Liv With Autism Foundation bowling fundraiser sponsored by Price Chopper will be held at noon April 6 at Stanton Lanes, 472 Stanton St., Wilkes-Barre. Cost is \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 11 to 16. Children 10 and younger are free. Individuals with autism spectrum disorder are also free. Cost includes three games of bowling, shoe rental, T-shirt, food and non-alcoholic beverages. There will be a 50-50 raffle. Event is designed to promote autism awareness. Proceeds benefit the Liv with Autism Foundation. For information, visit livwithautismfoundation.com.

Wilkes-Barre Free Clinic, on South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre, is sponsoring a fundraiser from 6 to 9 p.m. Feb. 22 at Touch of Class at the Palace. Event will include pasta bar, pizza, dessert, beer and soda. There will be a basket raffle and 50-50 will be available. Donation is \$25. Basket Raffle and 50-50 will be available. Donation \$25.

Back Mountain

The 12th annual spring craft and vendor sale will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 15 at the Dallas Chapter Eastern Star Hall, 15 Foster St., Dallas. Tables are \$15 for an eight foot table, which is provided. Tables must be reserved and paid by March 11. Eastern Star members will serve lunch and desserts. Welsh cookies will be sold. For information and a reservation form, call Dianne Corby at 570-675-4893.

Noxen Clothes Closet Valentine's \$1 bag days have been rescheduled to 1 to 4 p.m. Feb. 20-22 at the Noxen Community Center, Old School. All the clothing that fits in a bag is \$1.

Hanover area

St. Leo's/Holy Rosary Church, 33 Manhattan St., Ashley, will hold a "Nite at the Races" March 8 in the church hall. Admission is \$5. Cost of a horse is \$10. To make reservations or to buy a horse, call 570-825-6669. Food and beverages are included. Doors open at 6 p.m. Races start at 7 p.m.

Warrior Run Council will hold a work session at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 19 at the borough building, Front and Hanover streets. General business and personnel will be discussed.

Mountain Top area

Crestwood School District and Mountain Top Relay for Life will hold the sixth annual Hoops for Hope at Crestwood High School on March 18. Doors open at 5:15 p.m.

Games start at 6:15 p.m. The charity basketball event includes semi final games consisting of elementary versus police, then high school/middle school versus Crestwood seniors. After an intermission of foul shots and three pointers for prizes, there will be a consolation game followed by a championship game. During the games, teams from the Mountain Top Relay for Life will host individual tables selling various items in the cafeteria. Refreshments will also be available for purchase. T-shirts can be purchased by March 10 for \$8 by calling Dawn Marie Chalk at 570-262-6229. At the conclusion of the games, names will be pulled to cover a teacher in silly string. Monies collected will benefit the Mountain Top Relay for Life scheduled for May 17-18.

Faith United Methodist Church, 1448 Slocum Road, Slocum Township, will make homemade Easter candy eggs for \$1 each. Varieties are peanut butter, chocolate fudge, coconut cream, and butter cream. Orders are now being accepted. Call 570-868-5411 or 570-868-5511.

Nanticoke area

St. Faustina Kowalska Parish will hold its monthly bingo March 2 at the alternate site, St. Mary's School Hall, 1010 South Hanover St., Nanticoke. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. Early birds begin at 1:45 p.m. Regular games start at 2. There are door prizes and cash prizes. Refreshments will be available for purchase. All are welcome. Facility is non smoking. Parking and entrance are at the rear of the building.

Nanticoke Historical Society, located adjacent to the Mill Library, will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27. New members are welcome. Refreshments will be available.

Pittston area

The Greater Pittston

YMCA is offering group swim lessons for participants ages 6 months with an adult to adults starting March 3. Registration begins on Feb. 17. The Y offers a progressive swim program for preschool and youth age children. Advance registration is required for all swim classes. All classes are offered for both members and nonmembers of the Y. For information, contact Susan Vosik Pekala, aquatic director, at 570-655-2255, ext. 106. Visit greaterpittstonymca.org.

The Pittston Memorial Library, West Pittston Library and Wyoming Free Library are holding a "Little Miss and Mister Library" contest. Children ages 7-10 who are members of the Pittston Memorial Library, the West Pittston Library or the Wyoming Free Library are eligible. The applicants are required to submit an essay to their local library entitled, "what I like about my library". Essay deadline is March 31. Winners will be announced April 14. Submissions can be dropped off at the three participating libraries. Winners will participate in various community events including the Cherry Blossom Festival, Memorial Day Parade and the Tomato Festival. For information, visit wplibrary.org, pittstonmemoriallibrary.org or wyomingfreelibrary.com.

Hughestown residents are reminded cardboard will be collected with newspapers the last Monday of the month.

Hughestown Borough will hold its work session the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.

A walk for Thalassemia, a rare blood disorder, will be held at the Hughestown Hose Co. to Robert Yapple Memorial Park. Details will be forthcoming.

Avoca residents are reminded that shoveling or depositing snow on the travel portion of any public road is prohibited. Violators face fines of up to \$300. A copy of this ordinance is available for inspection at the office of the secretary, Borough of Avoca, 752 Main St., Avoca.

Avoca Council will meet Feb. 20 at the municipal building immediately following the 6:30 p.m. work session. Joseph Satkowski will preside. Public is welcome. Meeting was rescheduled from Feb. 13.

Moosic Recycling Truck will be at the municipal garage, Plane Street, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays. New system allows paper to be mixed with cardboard. Residents are urged to read and follow the signs on the recycling truck. The area will be monitored, and violators can be fined or banned from future recycling privileges. Recycling flyers are available in the lobby of the Avoca Municipal Building and at the recycling trailer.

Ashes are collected every Wednesday. Place ashes at curbside by 8 a.m.

Dupont VFW Post 4909 will meet at 7:30 p.m. March 3. Reports will be given. Officers will be nominated. Commander Gary Carwardine will preside. Home association meeting will follow.

Dupont VFW Post 4909 Home Association will hold its annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. March 15. Buffet is served from 7:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. Bar will be open from 7:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Door prizes will be chanced off. Donation is \$28 per person. For tickets and reservations, see Bob Lopata or call the VFW at 570-654-9104. Deadline for reservations is March 14. Visit vfw4909.com for information.

West Side

Edwardsville Neighborhood Watch will meet at 7 p.m. Feb. 20 in the Edwardsville Borough Building, second floor council chambers. All who are interested should attend.

Swoyersville Senior Citizens will meet at 1 p.m. Feb. 19 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton social hall. Liz Zdancewicz will preside. After the meeting a social hour will be held with refreshments and bingo. Winners of the 50-50 fundraiser were Daniel Shumack and Sue Kuloszewski.

Wilkes-Barre area

Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre will hold a take-out piggie/holubtsi dinner on March 2. Dinners can be picked up from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the parish school hall, North River and West Chestnut streets, Wilkes-Barre. Dinners are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and younger. Walk ins are welcome. Reservations are encouraged. Call 570-829-3051.

Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral, 591 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre, is accepting orders for the following:

Paska bread for Easter is available in small or large loaves, with or without rains.

Orders will be available from 1 to 4 p.m. April 9 in the cathedral parlors. Call 570-822-7725 to order by April 3.

Rolls for Easter are available including nut, poppy, apricot and lekvar (prune) filling. Orders will be available from 1 to 4 p.m. April 9 in the cathedral parlors. Call 570-822-7725 to order by April 3.

Pierogi will be sold from noon to 4 p.m. Feb. 25. Cost is \$6 per dozen. Call 570-822-7725 to order by Feb. 21.

[Return to Top](#)

Race for US representative heats up | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Pocono Record - Online

A Monroe County graphic artist and designer has announced that he plans to seek the Democratic nomination for the seat occupied by Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Marino.

Adam Rodriguez, 50, of , who describes himself as an "FDR New Deal Democrat," said a key platform in his campaign will be enacting a 1 percent tax on Wall Street transactions to curb "reckless financial speculation."

The federal government and states would share the tax revenues and would be "an important first step in countering the GOP's mean-spirited politics of austerity while strengthening the nation's social safety net," Rodriguez said.

"The revenue generated from a relatively minuscule tax on qualified financial transactions would go a long way in shoring up Social Security and Medicare while protecting our most vulnerable citizens who are dependent on programs, such as Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, LIHEAP and emergency extended unemployment benefits," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said Pennsylvania's working families pay a sales tax of at least 6 percent on almost all purchases, but financial speculators who work for "the same parasitical Wall Street casinos that U.S. taxpayers generously bailed out" pay absolutely nothing "on quadrillions of dollars per year on trades of derivatives, futures, stocks, bonds and other securities on U.S. exchanges."

"Make them pay," Rodriguez said.

Smaller investors, who trade less than a million dollars a year, would be exempt, meaning a typical Individual Retirement Account or 401(k) would be unaffected.

Rodriguez said he supports a \$15 an hour minimum wage, issuing federal bonds to

rebuild the nation's roads, bridges and other infrastructure and imposing a moratorium on hydraulic fracking.

He is the second Democrat to announce plans to seek the nomination to run against Marino. Lycoming County businessman Scott Brion has also announced his candidacy.

The 10th Congressional District includes part of Lackawanna County, all of Susquehanna and Wayne counties, part of Monroe County and all or parts of 11 other counties.

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[Return to Top](#)

Shenango coke should stop fouling the air | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Online

Bravo to the Group Against Smog and Pollution for filing an intent to sue the Shenango coke works on Neville Island (Pollution Group Says It Will Sue Coke Works, Feb. 12). Lets face it, if residents committed 330 violations of any sort in the past 432 days, theyd be locked up in the county jail. Why does industry get to get away with breaking the law? It shouldnt! I am sick of being afraid to breathe the air in this great city, especially along the Ohio River where I reside. Shenango needs to be held accountable and I dont mean just paying fines. If the coke works is going to continue to operate in the middle of a densely populated area, it needs to meet the highest possible standards to protect the health of its employees and our communities. If it cant live up to those standards, it needs to leave!

KATHLEEN KREBS

Brighton Heights

[Return to Top](#)

Kerry on climate: The secretary delivers a timely lesson on carbon | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Online

Secretary of State John Kerry, during a visit Sunday to Jakarta, Indonesia, addressed the increasingly pressing issue of climate change.

He was speaking to Indonesians, but he could have just as easily, given the relevance and importance of his remarks, been speaking to Americans. China and the United States accounted for 40 percent of the greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere that last year made the level of carbon dioxide the highest in recorded history.

Indonesia, surprisingly, is third among the worlds carbon pollution producers. Its emissions come from deforestation and agriculture rather than from burning oil and coal.

Mr. Kerry walked his audience through the familiar sequence of events. Temperatures increase, glaciers and other ice formations melt, sea levels rise and, if the phenomenon continues uninterrupted, by the end of this century half of Jakarta will be under water.

He did not spare the guns on the skeptics of climate change either. The science of climate change, he said, is absolutely certain and is accepted by 97 percent of scientists.

Taking dead aim at Americans who oppose action on climate change, he said the rest of the worlds population should not be diverted from dealing with the problem by a tiny minority of shoddy scientists and extreme ideologues.

He pledged President Barack Obamas attention to the matter and said he had taken his just-completed visit to China as an opportunity to engage its leaders on the issue. He said that governments should stop giving incentives to the coal and oil industries and take advantage of the economic opportunities offered by a rapidly expanding global energy market and by renewable energy technology.

Mr. Kerry, who has been concentrating most of his energy on Middle East negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, over Irans nuclear program and economic sanctions, and regarding the Syrian conflict addressed in Jakarta what he considers to be an equally urgent global issue. He ranked climate change alongside epidemics, poverty, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as a global priority requiring attention and action. Its everyones responsibility, he said, and lack of political resolve is the problem. History and future generations will not forgive lack of action by todays leaders.

[Return to Top](#)

State should focus on efficient fuels | [View Clip](#)

02/16/2014

Citizens' Voice - Online, The

A glaring example of how legislation often serves narrow special interests rather than effective public policy is an old state law requiring many state-owned institutions, including prisons, to burn coal.

For a century coal not only was the predominant fuel but the predominant industry in

Pennsylvania. Even as the industry declined across the middle of the 20th century, it had sufficient influence to keep the state government as a major customer through legislation rather than through the marketplace.

Now, several state prisons, including the State Correctional Institution at Waymart in Wayne County, want to free taxpayers from the grasp of uneconomical coal.

The prison, which houses about 1,500 inmates and employs 660 staffers, burns between 7,000 and 8,000 tons of coal each year. During the recent cold snaps, it has burned up to 35 tons a day. And its coal use is constant because it also uses the fuel for hot water generation. SCI-Waymart's coal bill is more than \$1 million a year.

Gas is the new predominant fuel and industry in Pennsylvania and it is eating coal's lunch not through legislation but in the marketplace.

The coal industry has complained that domestic use has fallen because of federal environmental regulations. Implementation of those rules has indeed caused large-volume coal users to consider other fuels. But there is nothing wrong with finally placing a price on the pollution that coal has generated - at no cost to producers or utilities - across generations. And newly abundant gas has proved to be not just cleaner, but cheaper than coal. That's why power utilities have been abandoning coal for gas, and why the state should enable all of its institutions to explore options.

It doesn't have to be gas. It could be some combination of renewables, such as wind or solar power where geography accommodates them, along with gas or geothermal.

But the state mandate should be for efficiency and environmental stewardship rather than for a particular industry.

[Return to Top](#)

Lawrence Kudlow: Janet Yellen's problem | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Northern Virginia Daily - Online

Stock markets cheered Janet Yellen's maiden congressional testimony this past week, as the new Fed chair emphasized the word "continuity" and offered no boat-rocking surprises. Continuity? I assume she means a steady diet of tapered bond purchases that will lead to the end of QE3 this autumn. In other words, investors seemed to think QE has run its course, probably overstayed its welcome, and that it's time the Fed got out of the bond-buying business, since that policy isn't doing much good and may be doing harm.

Ever the Keynesian who subscribes to the non-existent, long-term trade-off between employment and inflation, Yellen did express worries about long-term layoffs and the

shrinking size of the labor-participation rate. She's right about that. The labor situation is subpar.

The employment-to-population ratio is only 58.5 percent, way below its year-2000 peak of 65 percent. The participation rate is a low 62.8 percent, way below its modern average. The Joint Economic Committee estimates that jobs are 4.5 million below the employment trend line since 1960, and 7 million below Ronald Reagan's recovery rate. And average monthly private-payroll increases are only 178,000 in Obama's recovery. Compare that with the Reagan monthly rate of 330,000.

So Yellen is right to be worried about jobs. But she's wrong to think the Fed can do much about this.

Holding back growth and jobs are a series of tax and regulatory barriers that must be fixed if we are to move from secular stagnation back to traditional American prosperity. Obamacare is at the top of the list. The CBO puts the essential job loss at 2.5 million. It will be worse unless Obamacare is repealed.

Perverse Obamacare incentives will penalize industrious people as they climb the ladder of opportunity. They will lose their health care subsidies and land in higher income-tax brackets. This steep subsidy cliff is a work trap that becomes a poverty trap.

If it pays less to work, people will work less. The Fed has nothing to do with this.

But there's more holding back the economy than Obamacare. A recent report by Tax Foundation president Scott Hodge shows that the U.S. has the worst corporate and capital-gains tax structures among the OECD developed countries. The EPA is going to destroy the coal industry. The Obama administration refuses to open up federal lands for oil-and-gas fracking and drilling, even though the energy revolution is a high-paying job creator. And the National Labor Relations Board is pushing for snap "ambush elections" to promote unionization.

These are all job killers, but the Fed has nothing to do with them.

But the Fed does control inflation, which is a monetary phenomenon. And I'll give Yellen and her predecessor Ben Bernanke plenty of credit for today's low 1 percent inflation rate. But I don't understand why the Fed's planners want to raise inflation to around 2.5 percent. Higher inflation is a tax on consumers, families, investors, jobs and growth.

Paul Volcker made this point in a recent speech at the Economic Club of New York. Price stability, not monetary fine-tuning, is good for growth. And price stability, which ultimately means protecting King Dollar, requires clear monetary rules to maintain credibility.

But I'm not seeing any rules.

The Fed has already dropped its 6.5 percent unemployment threshold, which would have signaled a higher fed funds target rate with cash withdrawals from the banking system. No rule has replaced this. And in the fifth year of economic recovery, you have to ask why the Fed central planners are still operating a so-called unconventional policy. Instead, they need to lay the groundwork for normalization, which means higher rates.

Professor Allan Meltzer points out that more than 95 percent of the reserves that the Fed supplied under QE2 and QE3 sit idle on bank balance sheets. That money is not circulating through the economy. M2 money growth hasn't budged from its 5 to 6 range. That \$2.5 trillion in excess reserves has got to be whittled down gradually.

Yet Yellen made no attempt to pave the way for a transition to normalcy. And that includes interest rates. The Taylor rule suggests a 1.25 percent federal funds rate would be appropriate today. And a return to normal interest rates and the end of Fed credit-channeling would help the economy grow.

For most of the time under Paul Volcker and Alan Greenspan, the Fed operated a market-price rule that used gold, commodities, bond spreads and the dollar to guide the money supply and interest rates. It worked. Many now believe a nominal GDP rule would also help. Unfortunately, Yellen has backed away from all of these rules.

It's the job of Congress and the president to create jobs by reforming taxes, regulations and Obamacare. Yellen should limit her focus to stable prices and a reliable King Dollar.

Web: creators.com/opinion/lawrence-kudlow.html

[Return to Top](#)

Renovations at Culpeper High School near completion | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Culpeper Times - Online

By Alice Felts

© Culpeper Times

If all goes well, all renovations at Culpeper County High School (CCHS) should be complete by Thanksgiving, according to Hunter Spencer, director of facilities, planning and construction.

“We are working on our end to make this happen.” Ninety percent of the classrooms will be finished by summer. He stated that this will be an extremely active summer, with work also on the cafeteria, kitchen, ROTC, and gymnasium. The auditorium and

the agriculture area, including classrooms, wood and metal shops, will be among the last to be completed in this number one priority project in the Capital Improvement Five Year Plan.

The plan involves modernizing mechanical systems, including HVAC, electrical, windows, doors, plumbing, and communications. Although these systems are invisible to onlookers, Spencer said, CCHS “will look like a new building inside.”

Work will soon begin with the installing of security vestibules at school main entrances. Spencer said that only one to two days are needed for each vestibule installed, with most of the work performed during after-school hours and weekends. Vestibules are already in place at Eastern View and Culpeper County High Schools, as well as Yowell Elementary.

The vestibule to be installed next will be at Culpeper Middle School on February 21. Installation at Pearl Sample, A.G. Richardson, Farmington, and Sycamore Park will begin the following week. The vestibules will have cameras, along with a public address (PA) and access control systems. With the security additions, visitors will be required to present identification before being able to access school buildings.

Funding will be allocated soon for the three remaining facilities, Emerald Hills, the Annex, and Floyd T. Binns, leaving the Central Office as the last remaining phase in the plan to be implemented.

Spencer stated that along with more renovation phases, there needs to be more asbestos abatement efforts. He said, “Anything we find, we are trying to take care of.” The next abatement will start in mid-March in the band and choir areas.

Dr. Bobbi Johnson, school superintendent, stated there is an immediate need for new lab tables at CCHS. She informed the committee that “the tables are in bad shape.” The table legs are on blocks to achieve the proper height, but the move made the tables shaky and unsafe. Johnson estimated that replacements would probably cost approximately \$20,000.

Jeff Shomo, executive director of business and finance, gave an updated report on the Sycamore Park Elementary School roof, indicating that bids for replacement will be this spring. The original roof, installed 20 years ago, is in need of repair, as well as the roof on Farmington Elementary, which is over 40 years old.

Shomo also stated that over \$122,000 needs to be directed toward the \$250,000 bus wash. He stated that the school district is keeping buses four to five years longer than in the past and there needs to be better care taken of the undercarriage of the buses, along with a new water filtration system.

Other Capital Improvement projects needing attention are parking lots. At A.G. Richardson, the existing parking lot needs resurfacing and an additional parking lot is

needed due to insufficient parking availability. Pearl Sample Elementary is also in need of an additional parking lot, as well.

Johnson reported the need of two modular units for Farmington Elementary, along with a connecting bathroom facility. The annual cost of the two units would be \$34,000 and one-time setup costs would be \$20,500. The two modules will provide four classrooms, which will accommodate three teachers being added to the staff. Sycamore Elementary is also in the need of modules, but there may be an alternate plan to move students within the building for one more year.

The next scheduled meeting of the Capital Planning Committee is set for February 25, but Chairperson Elizabeth Hutchins stated that another meeting this month may not be needed and committee members will be informed as to the next date.

[Return to Top](#)

"No more Blackstreet"; Sheen engaged; Henson dies | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Virginian-Pilot - Online

■ 17 February 2014 | 1:16 PM

Teddy Riley: "It's not Blackstreet"

After Chauncey "Black" Hannibal won the rights to use the Blackstreet name, he started touring with the name, new members to the group and no Teddy Riley. In response, Teddy said, "Now, I wish those guys the best and I don't care if they use the name Blackstreet, because I don't wanna use the name Blackstreet – because there is no more Blackstreet. If you're not getting a combination of the old members, it's not Blackstreet. So if anyone's going to perform as Blackstreet, they should at least say who's coming so audiences aren't misled!" - via The Voice Online

Sheen decides to try marriage again

Carlie Sheen proposed to his porn star girlfriend Brett Rossi in Hawaii over the weekend. #winning, right? - via Hollywood Life

Jim Henson's son died

Muppets creator Jim Henson's son John Paul Henson has died at the age of 48. He fell victim to a sudden heart attack Friday in Saugerties, N.Y. John was the puppeteer behind the ogre Sweetums. - via USA Today

Who ya gonna build? Ghostbusters Legos!

Hey! It only took 30 years, but the Lego Ghostbusters set is here! - via Mashable

"Kid A" inspired dinner

A chef in Detroit is taking artistic inspiration from Radiohead's "Kid A" album and translating it into his own medium. This is debatable, but we think "OK Computer" was better tasting. - via Rolling Stone

Groupon's presidential claims

Groupon either made a mistake or was looking for some viral buzz with their Presidents Day promotion today when they claimed Alexander Hamilton was a president. Either way, Hamilton was a founding father, not a president. - via CNN.com

But who cares... Presidents Day isn't really a federal holiday. - CSMonitor.com

Fix Your Grammer

For the fun of it, Glove and Boots offers a little lesson we can all use.

[embedded content]

ShowBiz Minute: BAFTA, Westwood, Box Office

'Gravity' wins big at the BAFTAs; Westwood is all about the Fracking; 'The Lego Movie' stays at no.1.

[Return to Top](#)

Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco | [View Clip](#)
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The Trans Energy management team will also be available on Tuesday, February 18

Additional information regarding Trans Energy, including maps, investor presentations, news releases and videos can be found at the Company's new website www.transenergyinc.com. Trans Energy will regularly update information on the website to provide investors with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations.

About Trans Energy, Inc.

Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale

Forward-looking statements in this release do not constitute guarantees of future performance. □ Such forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause our actual results to differ materially from those anticipated. □

Forward-looking statements in this document include statements regarding the

Company's exploration, drilling and development plans and the Company's expectations regarding the timing and success of such programs. □ Factors that could cause or contribute to such differences include, but are not limited to, fluctuations in the prices of oil and gas, uncertainties inherent in estimating quantities of oil and gas reserves and projecting future rates of production and timing of development activities, competition, operating risks, acquisition risks, liquidity and capital requirements, the effects of governmental regulation, adverse changes in the market for the Company's oil and gas production, dependence upon third-party vendors, and other risks detailed in the Company's periodic report filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

□ For a more detailed discussion of the risks and uncertainties of our business, please refer to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012 filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We assume no obligation to update any forward-looking information contained in this press release or with respect to the announcements described herein.

Company contact: Steve Lucado

[Return to Top](#)

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Company contact: Steve Lucado

[Return to Top](#)

Fracking: A Cracking Success or Much Ado About Nothing? | [View Clip](#) 02/17/2014 *Valve Magazine - Online*

Fracking not only proves to be a boon for the U.S. economy, but also for the valve industry. Some EU states, however, are stalling.

Fracking is giving the U.S. a lot of hope. Utilizing this extraction method of unconventional gas deposits, the transatlantic superpower could become the world's largest gas producer. Nonetheless several European states remain skeptical and warn of the environmental risks of fracking. Is this much ado about nothing? Valve manufacturers would resent it, as hydrofracturing rock formations require numerous valves for the downstream process.

Loud Drilling

Fracking is disruptive. A mix of water, quartz sand or ceramic balls and various chemicals are pumped into rock layers. This brute force process creates fissures. "The chemicals in hydraulic fracturing fluid are used to reduce friction and protect the rock formation, thereby making the hydraulic fracturing process safer and more efficient,"

explains Exxon Mobil.

Valves are of great value: the right amount of gas, chemicals and sand need to be pumped into the drill hole, before the gas can be extracted in a controlled manner at the top of the well. Demanding technology allows manufacturers to extract gas from otherwise unreachable rock layers 3,280 to 16,400 feet beneath the ground.

New pipelines utilizing new valves convey the shale gas. U.S. company Quanta Services made record profits in 2012, reported German magazine Boerse Online, due to pipeline construction and maintenance. General Electric supplies gas turbines and compressors for the pipelines. Fracking is proving to be a lucrative business.

Fracking Creates U.S. Jobs

In the end, the shale gas makes its way to power plants. Should fracking become successful in the EU the way it did in the U.S., then additional, new power plants would have to be constructed – with a high amount of valves. An impressive supply chain for this component. The U.S. has calculated the effect of fracking for the economy. “We have a supply of natural gas that can last America nearly 100 years, and my administration will take every possible action to safely develop this energy,” stated President Barack Obama, adding that fracking will create 600,000 new jobs.

The U.S. is currently producing more natural gas than ever before. Obama also sees a golden future for oil exploration: “After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to control our own energy future.” His administration will speed up permits. The International Energy Association is also certain of a “golden age” for natural gas. For Obama, fracking is a transitory technology, until wind and solar power achieve higher output.

The prices for natural gas have been falling over the past 5 years, after the fracking boom began. However, the U.S. is currently experiencing an increase in natural gas prices. Natural gas is 60% cheaper in the U.S. than in Europe. In turn, the lower prices drive the domestic economy. Energy-intensive sectors and households profit especially from the development.

Energy-Intensive Sectors Profit

One such sector is the paper industry. If paper manufacturers are doing well, then they are lucrative customers for valve manufacturers. Low energy costs, however, are a basic prerequisite. Numerous valves are needed, as the paper and pulp production consists of various phases. The necessary range covers ball segment valves, check valves, gate valves and ball valves for manual on/off valves. Here, high-quality components are especially needed: “fluids, other than water, conveyed through hose lines are seldom harmless for the paper industry,” emphasizes Dr. Jens Reppenhagen, CEO of RS Roman Seliger Armaturenfabrik.

The chemical industry also requires a lot of energy for its processes. As such, the sector is prone to higher energy costs, to the detriment of valve manufacturers. A thriving chemical sector is good for orders – and demand is rising in the U.S.. Production is increasingly being relocated overseas.

Robust Valves

Valves have to do their part to contribute to low emissions, high plant safety and pollution control in chemical plants – and they must do it all in a demanding environment. Often enough, poisonous, corrosive and highly dangerous fluids are used to produce chemicals. Gate valves, valve blocks, pipeline components, gaskets, screws and flushing rings are required to withstand them. Materials “in all possible variations” are needed, explains Project Manager Björn Bofinger of AS-Schneider. Demands are also required for valves in fracking. The chemically enriched water pumped downward requires robust valves.

Plug valves, gate valves and dart-style check valves are needed for the pumps at the well site. On the pump suction side for mixing the fracking media are butterfly valves and swing check valves.

Constructing LNG Facilities

According to experts, the fracking boom will see the U.S. turn from a gas importer to a gas exporter. One problem, however, is the lack of necessary infrastructure. A greater number of pipelines for instance should lead to the coast. In addition, harbors also lack Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities for storing and converting gas for transport to Europe and Asia. The U.S. is set to invest several billion dollars in expanding and retrofitting their infrastructure. Valve manufacturers are also set to profit from this development, as valves control the flow of gas at gate terminals, liquefaction and vaporization installations and storage tanks. LNG tankers also need to be fitted with valves: shut-off valves allow steam to escape from tanks in order to maintain the required temperature and pressure levels inside the tank.

EU Cracks on Fracking

Fracking will not only offer the U.S. enormous amounts of shale gas, the reserves of which are estimated to more than 24 trillion cubic meters. China has the greatest deposits with 36 trillion cubic meters. Argentina is third in shale gas with reserves of 21 trillion cubic meters, followed by Mexico with 19 trillion and South Africa with 13 trillion cubic meters. As for Western Europe, reserves are estimated to be 14 trillion cubic meters.

Opinions of individual EU member states are divided on fracking. EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger sees fracking as positive, because of “security reasons and to lower gas prices.” EU Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard, however, has identified problems, as the situation in Europe can't be compared to the U.S., in view of geology and environmental regulation. From a scientific point of view, shale gas seems to be non-hazardous, according to Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Advisor of EU commission President Jose Manuel Barroso. While Poland and Great Britain argue in favor of fracking, France and Bulgaria argue against it. Both countries are considering a ban.

Environmental Impact Disputed

There are various reasons for this skepticism. Next to earth movements, objectors fear damage to the environment and contamination of groundwater – and thus also of

drinking water through the chemicals pumped into rock layers. Large amounts of water are flushed upwards at the well. Objectors refer to incidents in the Pennsylvania and Wyoming. U.S. environmental group Riverkeeper declares groundwater was contaminated through fracking.

Germany's Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), however, doesn't see any danger through fracking, "as long as the legal provisions are adhered to, the required technical measures are provided and location based pilot surveys are undertaken." "From the geoscientific view, an environmentally safe use of this technology is possible. Fracking and protection of drinking water supplies are possible," states the BGR. In addition, the EU has stricter environmental regulations than the U.S.

Considering Advantages and Disadvantages

One major problem is the wastewater that is flushed to the surface. This needs to be disposed of and recycled, in order to prevent incidents such as those in the U.S., where wastewater flowed into the environment. Valves play an important role in the purification process. In order to purify wastewater, it needs to be disposed in wastewater shafts and later transported to treatment plants. Against all odds, there is one major argument for fracking and all the gas plants that need to be constructed – namely that old coal power stations can be shut down. In the U.S., the level of CO2 emissions sank by nearly 10% in a six-year period.

Fracking: yes or no? Governments have to consider the advantages and disadvantages and come to a decision. Some are looking at economic benefits – in times of crisis, low costs of energy are seen as a driver for economic growth. One thing is certain: states need to make sure shale gas is environmentally safe. Otherwise fracking will not be accepted by the general public, and will thus have no future.

Guest Blog is courtesy Messe Dusseldorf.

[Return to Top](#)

Source of diesel fuel at Authority undetermined | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Southwest Times - Online, The

By MELINDA WILLIAMS

melinda@southwesttimes.com

The source of diesel fuel that entered the regional wastewater treatment plant in January was undetermined, but its impact on the facility was said to be "minimal."

Operations and laboratory staff at the Fairlawn plant detected an odor of kerosene or diesel fuel entering the primary clarifiers in the early morning hours of Jan. 14.

Pepper's Ferry Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority Superintendent Mac McCutchan said an investigation found the odor to be strong at the Radford pump station. Radford City and Montgomery County public works staff assisted with the investigation in an effort to determine from which section of the system the spill originated.

An assessment of sample material collected at the pump station determined the material stopped entering the station by 7:30 a.m. The samples were found to have a "high concentration of off-road diesel fuel," said McCutchan.

Despite the investigation, he said neither the source of the fuel nor the amount of fuel spilled could be determined. Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was notified of the incident and how the Authority's staff responded to the incident.

McCutchan said that while there was some loss of life in the biomass, staff's rapid response to the incident enabled the treatment system to "withstand the shock."

Continued monitoring over a three-day period detected no problems and the system continued to operate within the plant's parameters.

"Except for the odor of fuel oil which persisted for several days, there was no other adverse effects," McCutchan said.

[Return to Top](#)

Fort Worth watering restrictions could become permanent | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Water Environment Research - Online

Feb. 17 -- FORT WORTH -- The city's conservation efforts may keep the water flowing for future generations, but in the meantime officials are dealing with a major source of funding drying up.

The Fort Worth Water Department took in \$11 million below anticipated revenue last year because of the two-day a week watering restrictions and a decrease in oil and gas-drilling water use.

As a result of conservation and to anticipate the rising cost of water, the city is raising water rates at the same time the Fort Worth City Council is considering making the two day-a-week landscape watering restrictions permanent.

Conservation will be the best long-term option for the city as the demand for water

increases without an increase in sources, say city officials. Even though usage has dropped an average of 26 percent per resident since 1999, the city is still buying more water to serve a growing population.

"Obtaining new supply sources to get us more water and to meet those growing needs is going to be very expensive," said Mary Gugliuzza , spokeswoman for the water department. "It is going to cost considerably more than what our conservation efforts are costing."

Councilmen Jungus Jordan and Joel Burns , both members of the infrastructure and transportation committee, said the conservation efforts are needed to safeguard water for future generations.

"Even if we started today, it would be 20 to 30 years before we could bring in new supplies of water," said Jordan . "The biggest concern is that we do what we can today to ensure that this important resource is available to us in the future."

Jordan said he has heard support for the watering restrictions from his residents.

"I think our citizens have a consensus that conservation is import and they are willing to abide by it. So I think the conversation is -- how do you enforce it?" Jordan said.

Increasing demand, increasing water rates

The water restrictions, which went into affect in June 2013 as part of the city's drought plan, were not accounted for in the fiscal year 2013 budget, said Gugliuzza, leading department officials to use extra cash set aside for debt service and capital projects to pay its bills. The department ultimately finished the year in the black.

In the budgets for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, however, officials are taking into account that the watering restriction will be permanent and not a reaction to a drought, Gugliuzza said. The city is also gradually changing water rates to address conservation and rising cost of water.

About 80 percent of the water department's costs are out of their control -- personnel and raw water costs -- and approximately 20 percent are variable -- such as electricity and chemicals for water treatment, said Janet Hale , the water department's finance manager.

Revenues are the exact opposite.

In fiscal year 2013, 83 percent of overall revenue was based on the amount of water used and 17 percent was based on fixed fees, depending on the size of the meter.

Residential customers typically use less water and have a smaller meter, while commercial users will need more capacity.

To deal with that uncertainty, the city began a five-year plan to shift more revenue to the fixed-base fee so they are less reliant on the "volatile" nature of user consumption, Hale said.

For the smallest water meter, which is 5/8 of an inch, the 2013 flat fee was \$7.50 a month, but rose to \$9 in 2014. For the largest water meter, which is 10 inches, the flat fee rose by \$281.25 .

In fiscal year 2014, 19 percent of water revenue is fixed and that number will rise to 25 percent by fiscal year 2018 as part of the five-year plan, Hale said.

Water rates also go up in stages as residents use more water, which is a conservation effort, said Gugliuzza. Though the city raised water rates in 2014, those using the least amount of water did not see an increase.

"Water rates are expected to rise for the foreseeable future and we must take action to control those costs," said Mayor Betsy Price during her State of the City Address on Feb. 13 .

"Conservation is one of the cheapest forms to keep the water supply strong, but it is not the only solution, and we have to think with our partners at the TRWD (Tarrant Regional Water District) and the rest of the region about innovative solutions to entourage everyone to help us meet our future water needs," Price finished, as she announced plans for more conservation efforts.

A statewide problem

Jordan , also president of the Texas Municipal League , said water conservation is an issue for the entire state.

Proposition 6 passed in the November election and authorizes the state to transfer \$2 billion from the Rainy Day Fund to fund projects in the State Water Plan.

The money will be used to fund rural water projects, projects related to conservation and reuse and projects in cities.

With the state's population expected to double in 40 years, water shortages are a grave concern, Jordan said.

"Water and transportation are two of the key elements we have to be aware of for future growth in the state of Texas ," Jordan said. "Water has to be a concern for all of us, for the future of our children and our grandchildren."

Caty Hirst , 817-390-7984 Twitter: @catyhirst

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[Return to Top](#)

Industry News - Fort Worth watering restrictions could become permanent | [View Clip](#)

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The money will be used to fund rural water projects, projects related to conservation and reuse and projects in cities.

With the state's population expected to double in 40 years, water shortages are a grave concern, Jordan said.

"Water and transportation are two of the key elements we have to be aware of for future growth in the state of Texas ," Jordan said. "Water has to be a concern for all of us, for the future of our children and our grandchildren."

Caty Hirst , 817-390-7984 Twitter: @catyhirst

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[Return to Top](#)

Olympics Set To Transform Rio -- But For Better Or Worse? | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

WVTF-FM - Online

Rio de Janeiro is set to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games and there are two starkly different visions of what that will mean for the "marvelous city," as it is known.

"I would love to be born in Rio in 2020. The babies that are born here in 2020 will be born in a marvelous city ... because of the games," says Leonardo Gryner, the chief operating officer of Rio's Olympic Organizing Committee.

He says the sports arenas are the easy part. The plan, he says, is to totally transform Rio — better transportation, new museums, new housings — billions of dollars in development coming to this city by the sea.

"We are extending the subway system, we are introducing new transportation in the city, we are renovating the port, we are accelerating the cleaning of the bay, the

lagoon," Gryner says.

In a city where 40 percent of the population live in favelas, or shantytowns, that all sounds like a good thing.

But not everyone thinks so.

Missed Opportunity

One of the areas undergoing massive transformation is the historic port.

"It's probably the largest privatization scheme in the Americas right now," says Christopher Gaffney, a professor teaching architecture and cities at Rio's Federal Fluminense University. Gaffney has studied the impact of mega-events worldwide, and in particular, what's happening in Rio right now.

The Museum of Tomorrow, Rio's new modern art museum, and high-end apartments are going up as old highways in the area are coming down. All of this is happening among some of Rio's oldest buildings; the São Bento Monastery, with its elaborate stone 17th century architecture, is in the middle of all this construction.

Gaffney says the whole concept of what's happening across the city is wrong and the port is the perfect example.

"Instead of creating a space of conviviality, a space of shared culture, of community, of conversation, you are going to have this very isolated element where after 5 o'clock in the afternoon, it's going to be dead. You are creating banks, parking lots, Trump towers," Gaffney said. "It's been rezoned for 50-story buildings."

Because private money is financing much of this development, it's putting public spaces into private hands, to the detriment of the city's poorer denizens, he said.

The point of the port project, Gaffney said, is to attract high-income residents. For instance, the city is building a light rail system for just this area. But he said there will be no material improvements to the dire transport in many of the peripheral neighborhoods where most of Rio's workers live.

"So sure, being born in Rio in 2020 is going to be great for those who can afford it," Gaffney says. "Unfortunately, Rio has lost the opportunity to transform itself into a more just, a more livable city, and now it's simply becoming a playground for the global rich."

Ballooning Budget

Those aren't the only criticisms — the problems with the upcoming World Cup in Brazil this summer have cast a long shadow.

Rio hosted the 2007 Pan American Games, an event that came in way over budget and left little lasting legacy. Rio's Olympic Committee is vowing that won't happen. For example, the Olympic handball arena will be a modular structure that will eventually be carted off to be turned into four schools around the city.

Rio's organizing committee says everything is going to plan. The venues in the Olympic park are being built at a furious pace to stay on schedule. The venues rise from a vast former racetrack in the area of Barra de Tijuca in Rio, the city's far west.

But while the building seems to be proceeding, the bill is growing. A partial budget unveiled earlier this month saw costs ballooning some 25 percent. Organizers say that's due to inflation, growing labor costs and increases in the cost of the technology needed.

The final cost of the vast infrastructure and security projects set to accompany the big event — which will be financed by the government — hasn't been disclosed yet.

Anger over public spending for the World Cup was a catalyst for protests that swept across Brazil last summer. People are concerned not only about the money but whether in the end what was promised will be delivered.

Protesting Pollution

On a recent Saturday morning, a group gathered on Ipanema beach to protest the high level of water pollution in Rio's oceans and lakes, where many of the Olympic rowing and sailing events will take place.

Protester Fernando Leonards said he recently visited the future site of rowing events and saw unbelievable amounts of garbage. He said the Olympians aren't going to like what they see when they arrive.

"They are at risk of diseases, and I think that the government should be making this clear to everyone that's involved, and I don't think the government is doing this," he said.

A large-scale cleanup was promised for Guanabara Bay, the body of water that surrounds Rio. Giant so-called eco boats have been sent out, but protesters say it's a cosmetic solution: Only 30 percent of Rio's sewage is treated and still flows unimpeded into the area.

Rio is also facing a spike in crime despite the city's well-funded and well-publicized pacification program, a community policing initiative in Rio's favelas.

Leonardo Gryner, the chief operating officer of Rio's Olympic Organizing Committee acknowledges there are many moving parts in what the city is doing in advance of the games.

"The Rio 2016 project is a very bold proposition," he says.

Still, many Brazilians wonder if the billions being spent will really pay off.

[Return to Top](#)

EPA officials visit South Boston Thursday to meet with public | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

News & Record - Online

News SoVaNow.com / February 17, 2014

Representatives with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be visiting South Boston this week to field questions and listen to community concerns in the wake of the Duke Energy coal ash spill into the Dan River.

EPA officials plan to provide an update on the agency's response to the disaster, which saw an estimated 82,000 tons of coal ash escape from a waste lagoon at the retired Dan River Steam Station on the banks of the Dan in Eden, N.C.

The spill, first reported Feb. 2, took a week to plug. Duke Energy, owners of the decommissioned coal-fired plant, has said it will clean up the coal wastes in conjunction with environmental agencies — a possible topic of discussion at the meeting.

Representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 and other state and local responders will meet with the public at the Washington-Coleman Community Center on Thursday, Feb. 20 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Parking will be available in the rear of the building, located at 1927 Jeffress Boulevard.

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81

News & Record

Mecklenburg Sun

[Return to Top](#)

CLARK, JANE L. | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Petersburg Progress-Index - Online

Jane L. Clark, of Gaithersburg, Md., passed away Feb. 14, 2014, at Sanctuary at Holy Cross Nursing Home in Burtonsville, Md, just two days after celebrating her 95th

birthday. She was the devoted wife of the late U.S. Army Maj. Joe H. Clark, retired, with whom she had shared 52 years of marriage at the time of his passing in 1997. Born in Dayton, Ohio, she was the daughter of the late Robert and Rowena Selby Long.

She earned a bachelor of science degree in home economics in 1940 from the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas, and proudly served her country in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II.

She was a long-term resident of Petersburg and Reedville, Va.; and after 25 years, retired from her position as a home economist for Commonwealth Natural Gas in Petersburg.

Mrs. Clark was a past president and member of the Chesapeake Bay Garden Club, and had Life Membership in National Federation of State Garden Clubs and Virginia Federation of State Garden Clubs. She was also a National Accredited Flower Show Judge.

She is survived by her son, Richard L. Clark and wife, Elizabeth, of Gaithersburg, Md.; and by her nephew, Larry Keller of San Antonio, Texas.

Funeral and interment services will be private.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the General Scholarship Fund at the University of Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, TX 78209, Attn: Ms. Alex Castaneda, CPO#3

[Return to Top](#)

Column | **Fraim's circle of influence is upper crust** | [View Clip](#)

02/15/2014

Virginian-Pilot - Online

By Patrick Wilson
The Virginian-Pilot
© February 16, 2014
NORFOLK

Some of Paul Fraim's wealthiest supporters will gather at the Town Point Club for a reception on Thursday.

The mayor's biggest donors were listed on an invitation as "sponsors," and they include the most powerful people doing business in Norfolk. These are the people who have helped Fraim amass tremendous power.

In the 2010 election, Fraim spent \$579,156. Daun S. Hester, the closest challenger, spent \$64,054. Fraim got 63 percent of the vote.

The sponsor list could intimidate anyone considering challenging Fraim for mayor on May 6. He has held the post for about 20 years. The mayor is essentially sending the message: If you run against me, you'll also be going up against the major players downtown - and their money.

Here's a look at some of the people behind Paul Fraim Inc.

Corporate execs Macon Brock, co-founder and chairman of Dollar Tree; Neal Crawford, president of Monarch Bank; Bob Aston, chairman and CEO of TowneBank (Fraim, who heads the law firm Fraim & Fiorella, P.C., is the chairman of TowneBank's Norfolk directors); from Norfolk Southern, current and former CEOs, Wick Moorman and David Goode, and executives Debbie Butler, James Hixon, and James Squires.

Developers Harvey Lindsay, chairman of the real estate company that bears his name; D. Bart Frye Jr., known for developing Norfolk's East Beach community on the Chesapeake Bay; Robert M. Stanton, who led the effort to redevelop downtown Norfolk; Buddy Gadams, who has several residential developments under way downtown; Helen Dragas, the Virginia Beach developer who caused a small disturbance in 2012 at the University of Virginia.

Lawyers: These include Tommy Johnson, who handles real estate development deals and is the chairman of Willcox & Savage and Vincent Mastracco, a business lawyer with Kaufman & Canoles. The Virginian-Pilot's sister publication Inside Business ranked Mastracco No. 2 on its 2012 Hampton Roads "power list." (Fraim ranked 7th.) Mastracco represented Beach developer Bruce Thompson in his request for a new hotel and conference center in downtown Norfolk, a project that received about \$89 million in public money.

And the big names go on.

Barbara Zoby, a former chairwoman of the Planning Commission, is on the list. She and her husband, Sture Sigfred, own downtown restaurants that include 219 Bistro, Big Easy Oyster Bar, 456 Fish, Bodega. (These are good restaurants, by the way. I especially like the wedge salad at 219).

Current and former executives of Landmark Media Enterprises, which owns The Pilot, are on the list as well. They include retired Pilot publisher Bruce Bradley; John O. "Dubby" Wynne, who is a retired president and CEO of Landmark; former Landmark executives Richard Barry, Dick Roberts and Louis Ryan; Rusty Friddell, the executive vice president and general counsel for Landmark; and Jane P. Batten, whose late husband, Frank Batten Sr., founded the company.

Conrad Shumadine, a lawyer at Willcox & Savage who often represents The Virginian-Pilot, is on the list.

That could create the impression that the newspaper is in the tank for Fraim. But the newsroom operates independently of its corporate owner. An ethics statement Frank Batten wrote in the 1970s which remains in place today states, "Our news reports should never be influenced by the private interests of the owners or of any other group."

Fraim didn't shy away from acknowledging his longtime supporters.

"It demonstrates, I think, that I have support that's broad and deep." He paused. "And I'll be running a very aggressive campaign."

I've flooded you with names, but you may not be familiar with mine. I've replaced Jill Nolin as the city hall reporter for The Pilot. I've lived in Norfolk for six years and I've mostly covered crime and courts.

Would any challenger stand a chance against Paul Fraim and his backers? Share your thoughts with me.

Patrick Wilson, 222-3893, patrick.wilson@pilotonline.com , Twitter: @patrickmwilson

[Return to Top](#)

Drilling waste bill concerns local officials | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Journal - Online, The

CHARLESTON - Members of the community expressed concerns about a bill to allow for the disposal of drill waste from well sites in commercial solid waste facilities at a public hearing Monday before the West Virginia House of Delegates Judiciary Committee.

The bill, HB 4411, sponsored by Delegate Rupert Phillips Jr., D-Logan, would permit authorized landfills to increase capacity to accept natural gas horizontal drilling cuttings and waste. The legislation moved from the House Energy Committee to the House Judiciary Committee Friday.

"Clearly, the most environmentally sound approach to dispose of drill cuttings is at properly designed solid waste facilities, where the cutting deposits can most effectively be disposed of and managed," said Energy chairman Kevin Craig, D-Cabell, a sponsor of the legislation. "Otherwise, these cuttings are going to be disposed at the drilling sites, causing hundreds of mini-landfills being created around the state."

The legislation authorizes the state Division of Environmental Protection secretary to allow landfills to build and operate cells that are designated for drill cutting and associated waste. Until then, landfills may increase their capacity, according to provisions in the bill. The DEP requested the measure, for which no law currently provides, according to a press release.

Following a surge in use of the Marcellus Shale in the northern central part of the state, in 2011, the Legislature required the oil and gas industry to landfill the waste from drilling into the wells, according to Clint Hogbin, chairman of the Berkeley County Solid Waste Authority.

Since then, the DEP issued a memorandum to landfill operators to accept the waste from the Marcellus Shale drill cuttings in unlimited amounts, Hogbin said.

Hogbin said most counties, including Berkeley County, did not know about it. He said he found out in October at a statewide solid waste conference from a Wetzel County solid waste authority official.

Hogbin said the practice is contrary to West Virginia laws, which offers local control provisions included in the Solid Waste Management Act, which gave the local community-through public hearings, a referendum and the local solid waste authority-an opportunity to determine the size of a landfill, its monthly intake and allowed local solid waste authority to determine the location, Hogbin said.

"This was one of the very first pieces of legislation that empowered the local community, rather than (having) decisions being made out of Charleston," Hogbin said. "It was enormously popular."

Like Berkeley County, Wetzel County has a private, class B facility, meaning the landfill may take no more than 9,999 tons per month, Hogbin said. He said their landfill began taking more than 30,000 tons each month with public hearings for the community or evaluation of the impact on the infrastructure.

"It is an effort by them to codify their memo, make it legal to accept unlimited volumes of Marcellus Shale waste with no review by anybody at the local level," Hogbin said. "A facility, in theory, could accept Marcellus waste 7 days a week, 24 hours per day."

If the private landfill in Berkeley County were accepting Marcellus at the rate Wetzel is, the landfill would be full to capacity in 9 or 10 years, Hogbin said. State documents showed it has less than a 35-year life span capacity.

"The millions of dollars that have been spent over the decades on recycling and composting and saving landfill capacity would have all been lost if House Bill 4411 passes as it is written," Hogbin said. "That begs the question, where is the next landfill going to be?"

Charles Burd, executive director of the Independent Oil and Gas Association, which promotes independent natural gas, said the organization supports the bill involving the Marcellus Shale, which has created 7,000 jobs.

"This bill recognizes the reasonable approach to the disposal of these materials and associated waste," Burd said. "West Virginia commercial landfill regulations are among the strongest and most comprehensive. This will assure that these materials are handled in a highly regulated and environmentally positive manner."

Hogbin said the agency is not opposed to Marcellus drilling or putting Marcellus waste in a landfill. He said the county solid waste department has issues about who has discretion over Marcellus waste disposal.

"Because of the loss of the local-decision making, Berkeley County Solid Waste Department is opposed to House Bill 4411," Hogbin said. "Our opposition is (against) the House bill stripping the local decisions over tonnage caps."

Amanda Pitzer, executive director for Friends of the Cheat, a watershed preservation organization, said the legislation violates the Natural Gas Horizontal Well Control Act, which regulates well development. She said the industry should be required to build its own facilities and monitor them.

"There are too many unknowns," Pitzer said. "Do not unravel 20-some years of solid waste law."

Hogbin said he has spoken out against the bill to local legislators, who have expressed concern. He said he hopes legislators oppose or amend the legislation to reinstate tonnage caps and the local solid waste authority's role in setting tonnage caps.

Hogbin said Senator John Unger, D-Berkeley, has co-sponsored a bill, SB 594, to manage the Marcellus waste under certain criteria, such as requiring the public service commission to issue or deny a certificate of need. Under the bill, the solid waste authority sets the tonnage cap and has veto power over whether Marcellus waste would enter a landfill.

"Those are local empowerment provisions that have worked for the past 20 years at keeping capacity available in our landfills," Hogbin said. "This whole bill is a nightmare. This is the most defining solid waste issue probably that we've had to deal with legislatively in the last ten years."

There is drilling in Pennsylvania, about 60 miles north of the Panhandle, that is being landfilled in large volumes, Hogbin said.

"I understand the need to manage the Marcellus waste," Hogbin said. "All the solid waste departments do. We don't want the stuff sitting around in piles at the drilling site,

but stripping away the local level decision is setting the stage for West Virginia to become the home of mega-landfills."

Hogbin said he encourages people in the Eastern Panhandle to get involved in the issue by contacting local legislators. He said most of the legislation he has dealt with included the participation of solid waste authorities.

"In the past, there seemed to be willingness on all parties to make compromised legislation," Hogbin said. "This house bill does not have that feel. This is being rammed through. All of us feel kind of fortune that (legislators) even had a public hearing."

-Staff writer Erika Elaine Wells can be reached at 304-263-8931, ext. 215, or twitter.com/ewellsJN.

[Return to Top](#)

One Month Later, Many Still Wary of Using Water | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Intelligencer - Online, The

CHARLESTON (AP) - More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

This is Maddox's new routine three times a week, what she considers a necessary burden to feel safe drinking water, cooking with it and making coffee.

For weeks, government officials have said the running water in nine counties is suitable for all daily needs. But Maddox, like many of the 300,000 residents whose water was contaminated Jan. 9, is not convinced.

AP Photo

Public skepticism remains over the safety of tap water in the Charleston area, and some people still are obtaining drinking water from other sources.

She notes that officials waited four to 10 days, depending on the neighborhood, before allowing people to use their water. In the days right after Freedom Industries leaked chemicals into the Elk River in Charleston, officials said the water should be used only for flushing toilets and fighting fires.

Residents have struggled to track, let alone trust, mixed messages and muddled information from government officials and Freedom Industries, the company involved.

Despite public pressure, officials have been reluctant to call the water "safe" and have started arguing that the term is subjective. Instead, they use phrases such as "appropriate to use."

In Charleston, eateries display signs that say, "We're cooking with bottled water." The chemical licorice smell still wafts out of some showers, toilets and taps in homes and businesses. The smell resurfaced in five schools Feb. 5 and 6, and the district temporarily shut them down. The nine-county region was cleared to use the water before Freedom Industries revealed that a second chemical, stripped PPH, was in the tank that spilled.

Crude MCHM, the first chemical discovered in the spill, and stripped PPH, are used to clean coal. Little is known about their toxicity, in the short or long term.

Doctors are still advising some patients, such as people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems, to avoid the water on a case-by-case basis, said Kanawha County Health Officer Dr. Rahul Gupta.

Outside water continues to be brought in by tanker trucks and military vehicles, under orders by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration. The public still demands it, Tomblin said.

"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

[Return to Top](#)

One month after spill, Charleston residents wary of water | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Journal - Online, The

CHARLESTON- More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

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For weeks, government officials have said the running water in nine counties is suitable for all daily needs. But Maddox, like many of the 300,000 residents whose water was contaminated Jan. 9, is not convinced.

AP photo

Al Jones, of the West Virginia Department of General Services, tests the water as he flushes the faucet and opens a restroom on the first floor of the State Capitol in Charleston in January. More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, many residents are not convinced of the water's safety.

She notes that officials waited four to 10 days, depending on the neighborhood, before allowing people to use their water. In the days right after Freedom Industries leaked chemicals into the Elk River in Charleston, officials said the water should be used only for flushing toilets and fighting fires.

Residents have struggled to track, let alone trust, mixed messages and muddled information from government officials and Freedom Industries, the company involved. Despite public pressure, officials have been reluctant to call the water "safe" and have started arguing that the term is subjective. Instead, they use phrases such as "appropriate to use."

"Well, they won't use the word 'safe,'" said Maddox, who lives with her two daughters and two grandsons in Charleston. "But, the water is 'OK.' We don't know that."

Maddox is not alone, as visible signs of doubt about the water are everywhere.

In Charleston, eateries display signs that say, "We're cooking with bottled water." The chemical licorice smell still wafts out of some showers, toilets and taps in homes and businesses. The smell resurfaced in five schools Feb. 5 and 6, and the district temporarily shut them down. In one case, a teacher fainted and went to the hospital.

Hours after two of the schools closed Feb. 5, an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave a broad endorsement of the water, saying everyone, pregnant women included, could use it.

Up to that point, pregnant women had received conflicting guidance. Days after thousands of people were cleared to start drinking from faucets, federal officials advised that pregnant women should consider a different source of water.

The nine-county region was cleared to use the water before Freedom Industries revealed that a second chemical, stripped PPH, was in the tank that spilled.

Crude MCHM, the first chemical discovered in the spill, and stripped PPH, are used to clean coal. Little is known about their toxicity, in the short or long term. Neither is considered hazardous by federal standards.

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"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

Last week, Tomblin changed his mind on in-home water testing, which he and other officials showed little interest in before. The inspections are part of a larger study Tomblin ordered that looks into key details that officials relied upon initially to lift the water-use ban.

Tomblin contracted Dr. Andrew Whelton to lead the study. The researcher, based at the University of South Alabama, came to Charleston to study the spill without outside funding. Then he landed a \$50,000 federal grant studying what the chemicals do to pipes in houses. But he had been seeking online donations for return trips to West Virginia to monitor long-term water quality in homes.

Then Tomblin came calling and provided Whelton \$650,000 from the state. With that money, Whelton will sample water in some homes and continue investigating how the chemical permeates or bonds to pipes. Officials have maintained that the chemical doesn't have the right properties to stick around in piping and resurface later.

Whelton also is studying the odor threshold and threat of the chemical. Government experts have long said people can smell the licorice tinge well after the chemical is no longer dangerous in water or vapor. The smell enveloped the valley for days.

Whelton's team also is tasking experts to investigate the CDC's standard for how much of the chemical can be safely ingested in drinking water.

Tomblin's wide-ranging project would need millions more dollars in federal grants. He's calling for that money and, in an effort to re-instill public confidence, for the research team to be able to maintain independence from government officials.

"It is time to let the political officials step aside and let the scientists come in and do the work we need them to do," Tomblin said.

In a region nicknamed "Chemical Valley" because of the industry's huge footprint in greater Charleston, even residents who have lived here their entire lives are concerned.

At a legislative public meeting two weeks ago, several people said they're considering moving. Before the spill, people were already leaving West Virginia at one of the highest rates in the country.

Sue Davis has lived in Kanawha County for 71 years. She vowed that her faith in the

water would never return. She said trusting the authorities won't make the potential risks any less threatening.

"I think (people) are deceiving themselves," Davis said.

Each rash, itch, dry patch of skin or dizzy spell lends doubt for people who shower or brush their teeth in the water. Gupta, the health official, said long-term monitoring is needed to track health conditions that could develop much later because little is known about the chemical's long-term effects.

"People are as angry and as frustrated as they were in the first few days," Gupta said. "It's been a challenge. We are on frontiers unknown. And, the population - the 300,000 people or so - continue to suffer."

[Return to Top](#)

County Commission addresses concern over abandoned school | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Williamson Daily News - Online

Rachel Dove rbaldwin@civitasmedia.com

RAGLAND - "Kids are getting into the building and it's unsafe," said Benny Sawyers, as he spoke to the Mingo County Commission to express his concerns about the abandoned building at Ragland that once housed the Chafin Grade School.

"The fence is wide open. We've put up with this a long time and we've been kept on the back burner long enough, always being told there was too much cost involved," said Sawyers, a Ragland resident.

"We are asking if there is any way the county can please have this building torn down," he said.

The property in question is owned by Bill Chafin, whose family gave the Mingo County Board of Education the property for the school with the stipulation that if and when the school was ever closed, the property would revert back to the family. The building is now in a severe state of disrepair with portions of the roof falling in, windows broken out and walls caving in.

"The issue with demolishing this building is the cost it would take to have the asbestos removed that is in the floor tiles that becomes a health hazard when disturbed," said Commission President Greg "Hootie" Smith.

County Attorney Glen Rutledge was in agreement with the Ragland residents that the building was an eyesore and needed to be demolished, saying that he knew they could

get it condemned, adding that he had worked hard since the 1980s to have the building torn down and said the commission just has to put the ordinance concerning such circumstances into operation.

Sawyers asked if the county was willing to perform the job if the property holder could be held responsible for the cost.

“Mr. Chafin is a grown man,” Sawyers said. “He knew what he was doing when he accepted the property back from the Board of Education in the shape it was in.”

“To gain the right to go on that person's property and demolish this building would require legal action,” Smith said. “It has to be a legal process. If you tear down his building and you use county funds, then you have enhanced his property.”

According to Rutledge, the first part of the process is to inspect the property and acquire an estimate on the cost of removing the asbestos. This would require the opinion of an expert, and Smith said he was not comfortable taking county funds to pay an inspector to appraise a job on a building not owned by the county, until a legal process is in play.

“I don't want someone saying I'm spending county money on private property,” the commission president said. “If the commission wants to proceed, Mr. Rutledge can draft the paperwork, and if the landowner consents - fine. Then we can have someone specializing in asbestos removal to come in and give us a quote, but I'm not going over there on a handshake and a smile.”

The commission discussed placing a lien against the property to assure payment for the cost of completing the job.

[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Wetzel Chronicle - Online

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

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Crude MCHM, the first chemical discovered in the spill, and stripped PPH, are used to clean coal. Little is known about their toxicity, in the short or long term. Neither is considered hazardous by federal standards. Only a handful of studies exist for crude MCHM, and they were on lab animals.

Today, doctors are still advising some patients, such as people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems, to avoid the water on a case-by-case basis, said Kanawha County Health Officer Dr. Rahul Gupta.

Outside water continues to be brought in by tanker trucks and military vehicles, under orders by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration. The public still demands it, Tomblin said.

"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

Last week, Tomblin changed his mind on in-home water testing, which he and other officials showed little interest in before. The inspections are part of a larger study Tomblin ordered that looks into key details that officials relied upon initially to lift the water-use ban.

Tomblin contracted Dr. Andrew Whelton to lead the study. The researcher, based at the University of South Alabama, came to Charleston to study the spill without outside funding. Then he landed a \$50,000 federal grant studying what the chemicals do to pipes in houses. But he had been seeking online donations for return trips to West Virginia to monitor long-term water quality in homes.

Then Tomblin came calling and provided Whelton \$650,000 from the state. With that money, Whelton will sample water in some homes and continue investigating how the chemical permeates or bonds to pipes. Officials have maintained that the chemical doesn't have the right properties to stick around in piping and resurface later.

Whelton also is studying the odor threshold and threat of the chemical. Government experts have long said people can smell the licorice tinge well after the chemical is no longer dangerous in water or vapor. The smell enveloped the valley for days.

Whelton's team also is tasking experts to investigate the CDC's standard for how much of the chemical can be safely ingested in drinking water.

Tomblin's wide-ranging project would need millions more dollars in federal grants. He's calling for that money and, in an effort to re-instill public confidence, for the research team to be able to maintain independence from government officials.

"It is time to let the political officials step aside and let the scientists come in and do the work we need them to do," Tomblin said.

In a region nicknamed "Chemical Valley" because of the industry's huge footprint in greater Charleston, even residents who have lived here their entire lives are concerned.

At a legislative public meeting two weeks ago, several people said they're considering moving. Before the spill, people were already leaving West Virginia at one of the highest rates in the country.

Sue Davis has lived in Kanawha County for 71 years. She vowed that her faith in the water would never return. She said trusting the authorities won't make the potential risks any less threatening.

"I think (people) are deceiving themselves," Davis said.

Each rash, itch, dry patch of skin or dizzy spell lends doubt for people who shower or brush their teeth in the water. Gupta, the health official, said long-term monitoring is needed to track health conditions that could develop much later because little is known about the chemical's long-term effects.

"People are as angry and as frustrated as they were in the first few days," Gupta said. "It's been a challenge. We are on frontiers unknown. And, the population — the 300,000 people or so — continue to suffer."

[Return to Top](#)

House Judiciary hears pleas to prohibit landfills from taking fracking waste | [View Clip](#)
02/18/2014
Register-Herald - Online, The

By Pamela Pritt Register-Herald Reporter

CHARLESTON — An emotional Mary Rahall nearly lost her voice as she spoke to the House Committee on the Judiciary Monday evening. In the end, though, her plea came through loud and clear.

"Don't fail us," she said. "Protect me. Protect our babies and our kids."

Rahall, has lived in Lochgelly 14 years. She said she and her husband decided to move back to West Virginia because it would be a good place to raise their three children.

Now, though, Rahall questions that decision because, she says waste from hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking, is being brought to a sediment pond near her Fayette County home and then injected into a well she believes is near the source of drinking water for area families.

"How do I stay in my community?" she asked.

She was one of nearly 20 speakers who asked the legislative committee to maintain West Virginia's landfill laws the way they were written about 20 years ago, instead of passing a bill that will allow waste from Marcellus Shale well sites to be entombed in public landfills.

Rahall said she was shocked to learn the company that hauls the waste was granted another injection well permit just two weeks ago by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

"I don't feel like I can trust the West Virginia DEP," she said.

Greenbrier County's Glenn Singer, a candidate for the House of Delegates in 2012, said he assumed oil and gas companies are operating at a profit and could thus shoulder the cost of storing the leftover drill cuttings and fracking fluids themselves.

“What problems will the public inherit?” Singer asked. “Should the public pay to find that out?”

He said storing the waste was “part of the cost of doing business.”

Singer said some drill cuttings have been dumped in Greenbrier County's landfill, which is above the water intake for the country's 2011 Coolest Small Town. Heavy rains have caused some failure at the landfill and the fluids to leak into the Greenbrier River.

“I've consumed this water, just like all the citizens of Lewisburg,” Singer said.

His appeal to the legislature: “We want clean water.”

The Greenbrier County Landfill was fined more than \$11,000 for the leakage; however, the DEP did not specify that the “distinctly visible solids in the river” were from a source directly connected to the oil and gas industry.

Other speakers during the evening asked the committee to ensure the water's safety by making oil and gas drillers store potentially radioactive drill cuttings and fracking fluids in safe landfill cells that they create instead of using up public landfill space, which may not be adequate to store neither the quantity nor the constitution of the substances.

Charleston attorney Thornton Cooper said he'd worked on the original legislation for landfills in the 1990s. Now, he said, this bill “guts” those laws because it bypasses local control of landfills.

“I'm amazed it's even being sponsored,” Cooper said. “It's a wrecking ball that would undo a major amount of work.”

Several speakers drew a comparison to the recent chemical spill that deprived Elk River watershed residents of using their tap water for more than a week. Some people in the area are still not drinking the water they pay for every month.

Charlie Burd, executive director of the Independent Oil and Gas Association, alone spoke in favor of the bill. He said the industry had created 7,000 new jobs in the state.

“IOGA's members have an interest in the availability of environmentally protective disposal options for drill cuttings and associated waste,” Burd said.

He said the bill offers companies those options because the state's landfill laws are

among the strongest in the country.

“Disposal of these materials in commercial landfills will assure that these materials are handled in a highly regulated and environmentally positive manner,” Burd said.

The bill is not on today's Judiciary Committee agenda.

[Return to Top](#)

County Commission addresses concern over abandoned school | [View Clip](#)

02/18/2014

Gilbert Times - Online

Rachel Dove rbaldwin@civitasmedia.com

RAGLAND - “Kids are getting into the building and it's unsafe,” said Benny Sawyers, as he spoke to the Mingo County Commission to express his concerns about the abandoned building at Ragland that once housed the Chafin Grade School.

“The fence is wide open. We've put up with this a long time and we've been kept on the back burner long enough, always being told there was too much cost involved,” said Sawyers, a Ragland resident.

“We are asking if there is any way the county can please have this building torn down,” he said.

The property in question is owned by Bill Chafin, whose family gave the Mingo County Board of Education the property for the school with the stipulation that if and when the school was ever closed, the property would revert back to the family. The building is now in a severe state of disrepair with portions of the roof falling in, windows broken out and walls caving in.

“The issue with demolishing this building is the cost it would take to have the asbestos removed that is in the floor tiles that becomes a health hazard when disturbed,” said Commission President Greg “Hootie” Smith.

County Attorney Glen Rutledge was in agreement with the Ragland residents that the building was an eyesore and needed to be demolished, saying that he knew they could get it condemned, adding that he had worked hard since the 1980s to have the building torn down and said the commission just has to put the ordinance concerning such circumstances into operation.

Sawyers asked if the county was willing to perform the job if the property holder could be held responsible for the cost.

“Mr. Chafin is a grown man,” Sawyers said. “He knew what he was doing when he accepted the property back from the Board of Education in the shape it was in.”

“To gain the right to go on that person's property and demolish this building would require legal action,” Smith said. “It has to be a legal process. If you tear down his building and you use county funds, then you have enhanced his property.”

According to Rutledge, the first part of the process is to inspect the property and acquire an estimate on the cost of removing the asbestos. This would require the opinion of an expert, and Smith said he was not comfortable taking county funds to pay an inspector to appraise a job on a building not owned by the county, until a legal process is in play.

“I don't want someone saying I'm spending county money on private property,” the commission president said. “If the commission wants to proceed, Mr. Rutledge can draft the paperwork, and if the landowner consents - fine. Then we can have someone specializing in asbestos removal to come in and give us a quote, but I'm not going over there on a handshake and a smile.”

The commission discussed placing a lien against the property to assure payment for the cost of completing the job.

[Return to Top](#)

Feds knew Dietz Hollow Likely Contaminated 1979, But Failed to do Anything | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
HuntingtonNews.net

Monday, February 17, 2014 - 05:43 Updated 49 min ago by Tony Rutherford
HuntingtonNews.Net Reporter

Dietz Hollow (a.k.a. the Huntington Landfill) was placed on a preliminary listing of potential Superfund sites across the United States on December 1, 1979, according to Environmental Protection Administration Region III Technical Action Status Listings with dumpsite numbers.

The superfund designation stems from Congressional action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response , Compensation Act, sites on the list were proposed, listed or under review for a “priority list.” Those not placed on the list ended up “archived.” Many sites reach “archived” status without sampling.

The 1979 listing corresponds with the 1978-1979 dismantling /demolition of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC, now known as Dept. of Energy), Huntington Pilot Plant (Reduction Pilot Plant), which was on the campus of Huntington Alloys (a.k.a. the Nickel Plant, INCO, Special Metals, Precision Castparts).

http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3311_4109_4217-91583--,00.html

Although witnesses and historical records detail that certain contaminated portions of the debris were trucked to a classified burial site in Piketon, Ohio on the grounds of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant. Records and interviews indicate that the Huntington facility recycled core barrier materials from nuclear manufacturing plants in Portsmouth, Ohio; Paducah, Ky.; and Oak Ridge, Tenn., and others. The activity brought nickel carbonyl, uranium, plutonium and other radioactive metals to Huntington.

[Return to Top](#)

Adult Children of Asbestos Sufferers Urged to Contact Mesothelioma Victims Center | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
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SOURCE Mesothelioma Victims Center

Family members can help diagnosed victims receive financial compensation when they are too sick to help themselves

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- The Mesothelioma Victims Center says, "We want all adult children of a diagnosed victim to call so that the center can educate them on compensation and how to protect their loved one."

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20140217/PH65793>)

"Because of the age of the average diagnosed victim of mesothelioma is around 70, and because mesothelioma is such an aggressive form of cancer we are urging the adult children of the diagnosed victim to call us at 866-714-6466, so we can list the items that should be in place to make certain the diagnosed victim receives the best possible financial compensation." <http://MesotheliomaVictimsCenter.Com>

The Victims Center fears that each year hundreds of victims of mesothelioma or their family receive no compensation because either the diagnosed victim passed away before there was time to begin the mesothelioma compensation claims process, or because they picked the wrong type of attorney to advance a mesothelioma compensation claim. To change this from happening to any more diagnosed victims, the group is urging the adult son, daughter, or wife of diagnosed victim of mesothelioma to call them anytime at 866-714-6466 for on the spot help, and

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One-third of diagnosed victims of mesothelioma served in the US Navy. Other high-risk work groups for exposure to asbestos include: shipyard workers, oil refinery workers, manufacturing workers, plumbers, electricians, auto mechanics, machinists, or construction workers. Typically the exposure to asbestos occurred in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s*. <http://MesotheliomaVictimsCenter.Com>

The states with the highest incidence of mesothelioma include: Pennsylvania , Maine , New Jersey , West Virginia , Florida , Wyoming , and Washington . However, based on the calls the Mesothelioma Victims Center receives diagnosed victims could be in any state including: California , New York , Texas , Massachusetts , Maryland , Virginia , North Carolina , Georgia , Louisiana , Missouri , Ohio , Michigan, Iowa , Indiana , Illinois , Wisconsin , Minnesota , North Dakota , Montana , Nebraska , Kansas , Colorado , Utah , New Mexico , Arizona Nevada, Idaho , Oregon , Washington , and Alaska *.

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*For more information about a rare form of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos called mesothelioma, please visit the US Centers For Disease Control's web site:
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5815a3.htm

Media Contact:
M. Thomas Martin
866-714-6466

Read more news from Mesothelioma Victims Center .

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[Return to Top](#)

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SOURCE Mesothelioma Victims Center

Family members can help diagnosed victims receive financial compensation when they are too sick to help themselves

WASHINGTON (Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20140217/PH65793>)

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SOURCE Mesothelioma Victims Center

Family members can help diagnosed victims receive financial compensation when they are too sick to help themselves

WASHINGTON (Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20140217/PH65793>)

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State Journal - Online, The

SOURCE Mesothelioma Victims Center

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WASHINGTON (Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20140217/PH65793>)

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Research and Investment Prospect Analysis of China's Excavator Industry, 2013-2017 | [View Clip](#)
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NEW YORK, Feb. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Reportlinker.com announces that a new market research report is available in its catalogue:
http://www.reportlinker.com/p01187428/Research-and-Investment-Prospect-Analysis-of-China's-Excavator-Industry-2013-2017.html#utm_source=prnewswire&utm_medium=pr&utm_campaign=Construction_Equipment_and_Machinery

In 2012, 115658 sets of excavators were sold in China, reduced by 62694 sets compared with 178352 sets in 2011, year-on-year decrease of 34.3%. Since 2013, with economic recovery step by step and the construction of highway, real estate and railroad, which boost the demand of excavators, Chinese excavator market will be further expanded due to large-scale infrastructure construction that promoted by Chinese government and prosperous investment in real estate industry. There is a good prospect for excavator industry, because the demand of excavators will increase year by year along with the quickening economic construction and increasing construction projects in central and western regions.

Excavators have become the fastest growing machines in China's construction machinery industry, which placed an important role. According to sales status in 2012, domestic brand market shares continued to rise to 46.36%. While Japan and South Brand market shares continued to drop to 24.43% and 16.27% respectively; European brands remained stable with market share 12.95%.

For reducing environmental pollution, at present, different countries' governments formulated policies and laws for compulsory emission targets of motor vehicle so as to prohibit the sale and use of motor vehicles that emissions exceeded. In recent years, China also brought forward series of relevant regulations in accordance with international standards gradually. In the future, excavator products will take energy-saving and cost-reducing development direction.

Huidian Research takes a view that excavator market will be further expanded as continuing investment in affordable housing, the further implementation of development strategy in western regions and water conservancy construction as well as further transformation of transportation construction. In 2013-2017, the annual average growth will up to about 12%, it estimates that the sales value of excavators will reach CNY 170 billion in 2017.

Table of Contents

1. Overview of Excavator

1.1 Definition

1.2 Classification and Composition

1.3 Historical Review

2. Status Quo of Global Excavator Industry

2.1 Development Review of Global Excavator Industry

2.2 Excavator Industry in Key Countries

2.2.1 America

2.2.2 Japan

2.2.3 Germany

2.2.4 South Korea

2.3 Technological Development Trend in Global Excavator Industry

3. Macro Economic Analysis in China

3.1 Economic Development Environment in China

3.1.1 Macro Economic

3.1.2 GDP

3.1.3 Fixed Asset Investment

3.1.4 Total Export-Import Value and Growth Rate

3.2 Policy Environment of Excavator

3.2.1 Macro Policy Analysis

3.2.2 Relevant Policy of Excavator Industry

4. Dynamic Analysis for China's Excavator Market

4.1 Market Operation

4.2 Existing Problems

5. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Mini-Excavator

5.1 Development Status of China's Mini-Excavator Market

5.2 Problems of Mini-Excavator

5.3 Affecting Factors of Mini-Excavator Industry in China

5.3.1 Favorable Factors

5.3.2 Risk Factors

6. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Hydraulic Excavator

6.1 Market Development of Hydraulic Excavator in China

6.1.1 Development Status

6.1.2 Hydraulic Excavator Market Operation in China

6.2 Future Development Trend

7. Trend Analysis of China's Other Excavator Products

7.1 Large and Medium-Sized Excavators

7.1.1 Development History

7.1.2 Development Status

7.2 Wheel Excavator

7.3 Agricultural Excavator

7.3.1 Status Quo of Agricultural Excavator

7.3.2 Existing Problems

7.3.3 Primary Development Direction in the Future

8. Upstream Raw Material Market of Excavator Industry in China

8.1 Nonferrous Industry

8.2 Iron and Steel Industry

8.2.1 Market Status of Iron and Steel Industry in China

8.2.2 Influences on Excavator Manufacturing 8.3 Trend of China's Hydraulic Sealing Component

9. Downstream Industry Development Status of China's Excavator Industry

9.1 Real Estate Industry

9.2 Railway Transportation Construction

9.3 Mining Industry

10. Competitive Landscape of China's Excavator Industry

10.1 Competitive Status

10.2 Concentration Ration

11. Key Enterprises in China

11.1 Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.1.1 Company Profile

11.1.2 Business Performance

11.1.3 Competitiveness

11.2 Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.2.1 Company Profile

11.2.2 Business Performance

11.2.3 Competitiveness

11.3 Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.3.1 Company Profile

11.3.2 Business Performance

11.3.3 Competitiveness

11.4 Changlin Company Ltd.

11.4.1 Company Profile

11.4.2 Business Performance

11.4.3 Competitiveness

11.5 Guangxi LiuGong Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.5.1 Company Profile

11.5.2 Business Performance

11.5.3 Competitiveness

11.6 Xuzhou XCG John Deere Machinery Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

11.6.1 Company Profile

11.6.2 Business Performance

11.6.3 Competitiveness

12. Development Prospect and Trend of China's Excavator Industry

12.1 Future Development Prospect

12.2 Development Prospect of Excavator Enterprises

12.3 Development Trend of Excavator Industry

Companies Mentioned

Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

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Table of Contents

1. Overview of Excavator

1.1 Definition

1.2 Classification and Composition

1.3 Historical Review

2. Status Quo of Global Excavator Industry

2.1 Development Review of Global Excavator Industry

2.2 Excavator Industry in Key Countries

2.2.1 America

2.2.2 Japan

2.2.3 Germany

2.2.4 South Korea

2.3 Technological Development Trend in Global Excavator Industry

3. Macro Economic Analysis in China

3.1 Economic Development Environment in China

3.1.1 Macro Economic

3.1.2 GDP

- 3.1.3 Fixed Asset Investment
 - 3.1.4 Total Export-Import Value and Growth Rate
 - 3.2 Policy Environment of Excavator
 - 3.2.1 Macro Policy Analysis
 - 3.2.2 Relevant Policy of Excavator Industry
- 4. Dynamic Analysis for China's Excavator Market
 - 4.1 Market Operation
 - 4.2 Existing Problems
- 5. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Mini-Excavator
 - 5.1 Development Status of China's Mini-Excavator Market
 - 5.2 Problems of Mini-Excavator
 - 5.3 Affecting Factors of Mini-Excavator Industry in China
 - 5.3.1 Favorable Factors
 - 5.3.2 Risk Factors
- 6. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Hydraulic Excavator
 - 6.1 Market Development of Hydraulic Excavator in China
 - 6.1.1 Development Status
 - 6.1.2 Hydraulic Excavator Market Operation in China
 - 6.2 Future Development Trend
- 7. Trend Analysis of China's Other Excavator Products
 - 7.1 Large and Medium-Sized Excavators
 - 7.1.1 Development History
 - 7.1.2 Development Status

7.2 Wheel Excavator

7.3 Agricultural Excavator

7.3.1 Status Quo of Agricultural Excavator

7.3.2 Existing Problems

7.3.3 Primary Development Direction in the Future

8. Upstream Raw Material Market of Excavator Industry in China

8.1 Nonferrous Industry

8.2 Iron and Steel Industry

8.2.1 Market Status of Iron and Steel Industry in China

8.2.2 Influences on Excavator Manufacturing

8.3 Trend of China's Hydraulic Sealing Component

9. Downstream Industry Development Status of China's Excavator Industry

9.1 Real Estate Industry

9.2 Railway Transportation Construction

9.3 Mining Industry

10. Competitive Landscape of China's Excavator Industry

10.1 Competitive Status

10.2 Concentration Ration

11. Key Enterprises in China

11.1 Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.1.1 Company Profile

11.1.2 Business Performance

11.1.3 Competitiveness

11.2 Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.2.1 Company Profile

11.2.2 Business Performance

11.2.3 Competitiveness

11.3 Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.3.1 Company Profile

11.3.2 Business Performance

11.3.3 Competitiveness

11.4 Changlin Company Ltd.

11.4.1 Company Profile

11.4.2 Business Performance

11.4.3 Competitiveness

11.5 Guangxi LiuGong Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.5.1 Company Profile

11.5.2 Business Performance

11.5.3 Competitiveness

11.6 Xuzhou XCG John Deere Machinery Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

11.6.1 Company Profile

11.6.2 Business Performance

11.6.3 Competitiveness

12. Development Prospect and Trend of China's Excavator Industry

12.1 Future Development Prospect

12.2 Development Prospect of Excavator Enterprises

12.3 Development Trend of Excavator Industry

Companies Mentioned

Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

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Table of Contents

1. Overview of Excavator

1.1 Definition

1.2 Classification and Composition

1.3 Historical Review

2. Status Quo of Global Excavator Industry

2.1 Development Review of Global Excavator Industry

2.2 Excavator Industry in Key Countries

2.2.1 America

2.2.2 Japan

2.2.3 Germany

2.2.4 South Korea

2.3 Technological Development Trend in Global Excavator Industry

- 3. Macro Economic Analysis in China
 - 3.1 Economic Development Environment in China
 - 3.1.1 Macro Economic
 - 3.1.2 GDP
 - 3.1.3 Fixed Asset Investment
 - 3.1.4 Total Export-Import Value and Growth Rate
 - 3.2 Policy Environment of Excavator
 - 3.2.1 Macro Policy Analysis
 - 3.2.2 Relevant Policy of Excavator Industry
- 4. Dynamic Analysis for China's Excavator Market
 - 4.1 Market Operation
 - 4.2 Existing Problems
- 5. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Mini-Excavator
 - 5.1 Development Status of China's Mini-Excavator Market
 - 5.2 Problems of Mini-Excavator
 - 5.3 Affecting Factors of Mini-Excavator Industry in China
 - 5.3.1 Favorable Factors
 - 5.3.2 Risk Factors
- 6. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Hydraulic Excavator
 - 6.1 Market Development of Hydraulic Excavator in China
 - 6.1.1 Development Status
 - 6.1.2 Hydraulic Excavator Market Operation in China
 - 6.2 Future Development Trend

7. Trend Analysis of China's Other Excavator Products

7.1 Large and Medium-Sized Excavators

7.1.1 Development History

7.1.2 Development Status

7.2 Wheel Excavator

7.3 Agricultural Excavator

7.3.1 Status Quo of Agricultural Excavator

7.3.2 Existing Problems

7.3.3 Primary Development Direction in the Future

8. Upstream Raw Material Market of Excavator Industry in China

8.1 Nonferrous Industry

8.2 Iron and Steel Industry

8.2.1 Market Status of Iron and Steel Industry in China

8.2.2 Influences on Excavator Manufacturing

8.3 Trend of China's Hydraulic Sealing Component

9. Downstream Industry Development Status of China's Excavator Industry

9.1 Real Estate Industry

9.2 Railway Transportation Construction

9.3 Mining Industry

10. Competitive Landscape of China's Excavator Industry

10.1 Competitive Status

10.2 Concentration Ration

11. Key Enterprises in China

11.1 Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.1.1 Company Profile

11.1.2 Business Performance

11.1.3 Competitiveness

11.2 Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.2.1 Company Profile

11.2.2 Business Performance

11.2.3 Competitiveness

11.3 Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.3.1 Company Profile

11.3.2 Business Performance

11.3.3 Competitiveness

11.4 Changlin Company Ltd.

11.4.1 Company Profile

11.4.2 Business Performance

11.4.3 Competitiveness

11.5 Guangxi LiuGong Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.5.1 Company Profile

11.5.2 Business Performance

11.5.3 Competitiveness

11.6 Xuzhou XCG John Deere Machinery Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

11.6.1 Company Profile

11.6.2 Business Performance

11.6.3 Competitiveness

12. Development Prospect and Trend of China's Excavator Industry

12.1 Future Development Prospect

12.2 Development Prospect of Excavator Enterprises

12.3 Development Trend of Excavator Industry

Companies Mentioned

Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

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Table of Contents

1. Overview of Excavator

1.1 Definition

1.2 Classification and Composition

1.3 Historical Review

2. Status Quo of Global Excavator Industry

2.1 Development Review of Global Excavator Industry

2.2 Excavator Industry in Key Countries

2.2.1 America

2.2.2 Japan

2.2.3 Germany

2.2.4 South Korea

2.3 Technological Development Trend in Global Excavator Industry

3. Macro Economic Analysis in China

3.1 Economic Development Environment in China

3.1.1 Macro Economic

3.1.2 GDP

3.1.3 Fixed Asset Investment

3.1.4 Total Export-Import Value and Growth Rate

3.2 Policy Environment of Excavator

3.2.1 Macro Policy Analysis

3.2.2 Relevant Policy of Excavator Industry

4. Dynamic Analysis for China's Excavator Market

4.1 Market Operation

4.2 Existing Problems

5. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Mini-Excavator

5.1 Development Status of China's Mini-Excavator Market

5.2 Problems of Mini-Excavator

5.3 Affecting Factors of Mini-Excavator Industry in China

5.3.1 Favorable Factors

5.3.2 Risk Factors

6. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Hydraulic Excavator

6.1 Market Development of Hydraulic Excavator in China

6.1.1 Development Status

6.1.2 Hydraulic Excavator Market Operation in China

6.2 Future Development Trend

7. Trend Analysis of China's Other Excavator Products

7.1 Large and Medium-Sized Excavators

7.1.1 Development History

7.1.2 Development Status

7.2 Wheel Excavator

7.3 Agricultural Excavator

7.3.1 Status Quo of Agricultural Excavator

7.3.2 Existing Problems

7.3.3 Primary Development Direction in the Future

8. Upstream Raw Material Market of Excavator Industry in China

8.1 Nonferrous Industry

8.2 Iron and Steel Industry

8.2.1 Market Status of Iron and Steel Industry in China

8.2.2 Influences on Excavator Manufacturing

8.3 Trend of China's Hydraulic Sealing Component

9. Downstream Industry Development Status of China's Excavator Industry

9.1 Real Estate Industry

9.2 Railway Transportation Construction

9.3 Mining Industry

10. Competitive Landscape of China's Excavator Industry

10.1 Competitive Status

10.2 Concentration Ration

11. Key Enterprises in China

11.1 Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.1.1 Company Profile

11.1.2 Business Performance

11.1.3 Competitiveness

11.2 Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.2.1 Company Profile

11.2.2 Business Performance

11.2.3 Competitiveness

11.3 Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.3.1 Company Profile

11.3.2 Business Performance

11.3.3 Competitiveness

11.4 Changlin Company Ltd.

11.4.1 Company Profile

11.4.2 Business Performance

11.4.3 Competitiveness

11.5 Guangxi LiuGong Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.5.1 Company Profile

11.5.2 Business Performance

11.5.3 Competitiveness

11.6 Xuzhou XCG John Deere Machinery Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

11.6.1 Company Profile

11.6.2 Business Performance

11.6.3 Competitiveness

12. Development Prospect and Trend of China's Excavator Industry

12.1 Future Development Prospect

12.2 Development Prospect of Excavator Enterprises

12.3 Development Trend of Excavator Industry

Companies Mentioned

Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

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Table of Contents

1. Overview of Excavator

1.1 Definition

1.2 Classification and Composition

1.3 Historical Review

2. Status Quo of Global Excavator Industry	
2.1 Development Review of Global Excavator Industry	
2.2 Excavator Industry in Key Countries	
2.2.1 America	
2.2.2 Japan	
2.2.3 Germany	
2.2.4 South Korea	
2.3 Technological Development Trend in Global Excavator Industry	
3. Macro Economic Analysis in China	
3.1 Economic Development Environment in China	
3.1.1 Macro Economic	
3.1.2 GDP	
3.1.3 Fixed Asset Investment	
3.1.4 Total Export-Import Value and Growth Rate	
3.2 Policy Environment of Excavator	
3.2.1 Macro Policy Analysis	
3.2.2 Relevant Policy of Excavator Industry	
4. Dynamic Analysis for China's Excavator Market	
4.1 Market Operation	
4.2 Existing Problems	
5. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Mini-Excavator	
5.1 Development Status of China's Mini-Excavator Market	
5.2 Problems of Mini-Excavator	

5.3 Affecting Factors of Mini-Excavator Industry in China

5.3.1 Favorable Factors

5.3.2 Risk Factors

6. China Excavator Industry Segmentation - Hydraulic Excavator

6.1 Market Development of Hydraulic Excavator in China

6.1.1 Development Status

6.1.2 Hydraulic Excavator Market Operation in China

6.2 Future Development Trend

7. Trend Analysis of China's Other Excavator Products

7.1 Large and Medium-Sized Excavators

7.1.1 Development History

7.1.2 Development Status

7.2 Wheel Excavator

7.3 Agricultural Excavator

7.3.1 Status Quo of Agricultural Excavator

7.3.2 Existing Problems

7.3.3 Primary Development Direction in the Future

8. Upstream Raw Material Market of Excavator Industry in China

8.1 Nonferrous Industry

8.2 Iron and Steel Industry

8.2.1 Market Status of Iron and Steel Industry in China

8.2.2 Influences on Excavator Manufacturing

8.3 Trend of China's Hydraulic Sealing Component

9. Downstream Industry Development Status of China's Excavator Industry

9.1 Real Estate Industry

9.2 Railway Transportation Construction

9.3 Mining Industry

10. Competitive Landscape of China's Excavator Industry

10.1 Competitive Status

10.2 Concentration Ratio

11. Key Enterprises in China

11.1 Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.1.1 Company Profile

11.1.2 Business Performance

11.1.3 Competitiveness

11.2 Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

11.2.1 Company Profile

11.2.2 Business Performance

11.2.3 Competitiveness

11.3 Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.3.1 Company Profile

11.3.2 Business Performance

11.3.3 Competitiveness

11.4 Changlin Company Ltd.

11.4.1 Company Profile

11.4.2 Business Performance

11.4.3 Competitiveness

11.5 Guangxi LiuGong Machinery Co., Ltd.

11.5.1 Company Profile

11.5.2 Business Performance

11.5.3 Competitiveness

11.6 Xuzhou XCG John Deere Machinery Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

11.6.1 Company Profile

11.6.2 Business Performance

11.6.3 Competitiveness

12. Development Prospect and Trend of China's Excavator Industry

12.1 Future Development Prospect

12.2 Development Prospect of Excavator Enterprises

12.3 Development Trend of Excavator Industry

Companies Mentioned

Sany Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Taiyuan Heavy Industry Co., Ltd.

Hunan Sunward Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd.

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Group Seeks More Scrutiny for Eastern Ohio Mine Plan | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

WTRF-TV - Online

CARROLLTON, Ohio (AP) - A citizens group is requesting extra scrutiny of a company's plans for an underground coal mine in eastern Ohio because of the January chemical spill that contaminated the water supply for 300,000 West Virginians.

The mine south of Carrollton is planned by Rosebud Mining Co. That company's owner also owns the firm responsible for the West Virginia spill, Freedom Industries.

The Times-Reporter in the Dover-New Philadelphia area (<http://bit.ly/MSchnx>) reports the Carroll Concerned Citizens group has asked the state Department of Natural Resources to put a hold on new coal mining permit requests by Rosebud.

The group's attorney wants extra scrutiny on Rosebud's application. Residents are concerned about making protecting their groundwater.

The newspaper says Rosebud officials didn't respond to a request for comment.

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Freedom Industries cleanup continues; contamination extent still unknown | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Cleanup crews at Freedom Industries are still several weeks away from emptying all of the site's chemical storage tanks, and still don't have a clear idea of how much of which materials could have contaminated soil at the site.

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is overseeing the cleanup, which is being carried out by Freedom Industries and contractors for the chemical company.

Mike Dorsey, director of emergency response and homeland security for the DEP, said he hopes remediation of the facility might be completed by late spring. However, state and federal government officials remain unsure of the extent of contamination in a key part of the site.

The area around the chemical tanks in the northern end of the site -- including Tank 396, which leaked Crude MCHM into the Elk River on Jan. 9 -- has yet to be fully investigated, largely because the eight chemical tanks there haven't been removed. U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin is conducting a criminal investigation of the leak. The U.S. Chemical Safety Board also is examining the incident. Neither agency has completed its work in that area, Dorsey said, but those investigators should finish in the area soon. "The sooner we can get in there, the better," Dorsey said in an interview last week.

Until the tanks are removed, he said, it's impossible to judge the extent of soil contamination or to know how much remediation must be done to clean up the area. "The stuff was flowing around underground and who knows where," Dorsey said. "I don't expect to find large quantities of it, but I expect to find some." The presence of more MCHM in the soil at the site not only will require additional cleanup, but that work likely will bring with it more of the licorice-like smell Charleston residents have become familiar with since the Freedom Industries leak. "It's going to smell again, and it's going to scare people, and I understand that," Dorsey said. It's not clear how long the tank removal itself will take, but the DEP is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on a plan for air monitoring during the cleanup. "They were talking about what would be the best way to monitor for this stuff," Dorsey said. "I don't know if they will be able to do anything in real time, though." So far at the site, cleanup crews have dug a ditch that is several hundred feet long and four- to six-feet deep and is designed to intercept any runoff of potentially contaminated water from the site before it could possibly reach the Elk River.

Materials captured by the ditch are pumped into the other tanks at the site for storage until they can be safely removed from the site, Dorsey said.

Crews also have installed monitoring wells to gather data on potential groundwater contamination, but complete results of that monitoring have not been made public. One thing that's different about the Freedom Industries' cleanup is that the DEP is not doing it under the authority of programs the public typically thinks of for toxic remediation, such as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, better known as Superfund or CERCLA.

Because of the lack of testing of MCHM's toxicity, the chemical has never been listed as one of the substances regulated under programs like CERCLA. So the DEP used other legal avenues in its response to last month's leak. When DEP Secretary Randy Huffman worked out a consent order with Freedom Industries last month, the order cited the state's authority under Freedom's Clean Water Act stormwater pollution permit.

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram - Online

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[Return to Top](#)

House panel to hold hearing on drilling waste tonight | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Lawmakers will hear from the public this evening on a bill aimed at exempting from West Virginia's landmark landfill tonnage limits waste from the boom in natural gas drilling in the state's Marcellus Shale region.

The House Judiciary Committee scheduled the public hearing on the bill (HB4411) for 5 p.m. at the House chamber.

Earlier in the day, the West Virginia Environmental Council is holding its annual "E-Day" event at the Capitol.

The bill, supported by the state Department of Environmental Protection, would help state regulators quell an ongoing controversy over the dumping of huge amounts of gas-drilling waste in some of the state's landfills.

DEP Secretary Randy Huffman previously described the issue as "kind of an

emergency situation" in which some landfills were in danger of exceeding their legal tonnage caps.

As part of Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's "Horizontal Drilling Act," passed during a special session in December 2011, lawmakers tried to encourage disposal of solid wastes from drilling operations in permitted landfills.

Prior to the law, some drilling companies disposed of these materials on the drilling sites, sometimes without the consent of the surface landowner, and sometimes without liners and other environmental protections required of modern landfills.

The 2011 law said that solid wastes from drilling had to be sent to permitted landfills or could be disposed of at drilling sites if the surface landowner consented.

But, the new law butted against monthly landfill tonnage caps created by lawmakers two decades ago as a safeguard against the creation of "mega-dumps" that proposed to bring millions of tons of out-of-state garbage to West Virginia.

Now, though, gas-drilling wastes represent nearly a third of the materials being accepted at the six West Virginia landfills that are taking in such wastes, according to data from DEP for the period from July 2012 to July 2013. Those landfills are in Brooke, Harrison, Ohio, Wetzel and Wood counties.

The legislation would allow landfills to "lawfully receive" drilling wastes in amounts "above the monthly tonnage limits."

The bill is pending in the House Judiciary Committee after passing the House Energy Committee.

[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Intelligencer - Online, The

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[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Elkins Inter-Mountain - Online

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[Return to Top](#)

Trans Energy, Inc. To Present At EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 In San Francisco | [View Clip](#)
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SOURCE Trans Energy, Inc.

ST. MARYS, W.Va., Feb. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG), announced today that Chairman Steve Lucado and President John Corp will present at EnerCom's The Oil & Services Conference™ 12 on Wednesday, February 19, 2014. The conference will be held at the Omni Hotel in San Francisco, California. □ Trans Energy's presentation begins at 10:55 a.m (PST) and will be webcast live. The webcast of the Trans Energy, Inc. presentation can be accessed via the Trans Energy, Inc. website located at: www.transenergyinc.com.

The Trans Energy management team will also be available on Tuesday, February 18th and Wednesday, February 19th prior to their presentation for one-on-one investor meetings. □ Investment community professionals interested in scheduling a one-on-one investor meeting with management should contact Brian Brooks at EnerCom, Inc. (303) 296-8834 or Bbrooks@enercominc.com

Additional information regarding Trans Energy, including maps, investor presentations, news releases and videos can be found at the Company's new website www.transenergyinc.com. Trans Energy will regularly update information on the website to provide investors with the most up to date information on the Company and its operations.

About Trans Energy, Inc.

Trans Energy, Inc. (OTCQB: TENG) is a pure play Marcellus Shale oil and gas exploration and development company, headquartered in the Appalachian Basin. Further information can be found on the Company's website at www.transenergyinc.com.

Forward-looking statements in this release do not constitute guarantees of future performance. □ Such forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause our actual results to differ materially from those anticipated. □ Forward-looking statements in this document include statements regarding the Company's exploration, drilling and development plans and the Company's expectations regarding the timing and success of such programs. □ Factors that could cause or contribute to such differences include, but are not limited to, fluctuations in the prices of oil and gas, uncertainties inherent in estimating quantities of oil and gas reserves and projecting future rates of production and timing of development activities, competition, operating risks, acquisition risks, liquidity and capital requirements, the effects of governmental regulation, adverse changes in the market for the Company's oil and gas production, dependence upon third-party vendors, and other risks detailed in the Company's periodic report filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

□ For a more detailed discussion of the risks and uncertainties of our business, please refer to our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012 filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We assume no obligation to update any forward-looking information contained in this press release or with respect to the announcements described herein.

Company contact:

Steve Lucado

304-684-7053

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[Return to Top](#)

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ST. MARYS, W.Va.

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[Return to Top](#)

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[Return to Top](#)

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[Return to Top](#)

Citizen groups push for broader water reforms | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Environmental groups gathered at the state Capitol on Monday, hoping to convince lawmakers that last month's Elk River chemical spill is proof that major changes are needed in how West Virginia protects its water.

As part of its annual E-Day, West Virginia Environmental Council organizers urged

the Legislature to strengthen a chemical storage tank bill and broaden their approach to other water quality and public health issues.

"This is not just about Freedom Industries," said Angie Rosser, executive director of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition. "It's about what's been happening across our state for decades."

Rosser was among about 100 people from around the state who gathered in the Capitol's lower rotunda for a press conference and rally, as various full-time lobbyists watched from a floor above.

Among other things, environmentalists said they wanted lawmakers to remove industry-proposed exemptions from the chemical storage tank bill, expand the types of facilities covered by the legislation, and mandate creation of a new chemical accident prevention program recommended by the U.S. Chemical Safety Board.

"The problem is not that one leak from that one tank on the Elk River," said Jim Kotcon, longtime leader of the West Virginia Sierra Club. "The problem is tank after tank and impoundment after impoundment that are leaking all the time."

Don Garvin, the environmental council's lead lobbyist, said he sees some progress with lawmakers.

For example, Garvin said, lawmakers removed a weakened water pollution limit for aluminum - a measure backed by the coal industry and the Department of Environmental Protection - from a bundle of DEP rule changes.

"We raised an issue about weakening the state's water quality standards," Garvin said. "No one wanted to be seen as doing that after the chemical spill."

[Return to Top](#)

Drilling waste could go to landfills | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

MetroNews - Online

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Permitted landfills would be allowed to accept more cuttings and waste from natural gas drilling sites with a bill that's now pending in the House Judiciary Committee.

A public hearing on HB 4411, which the House Energy Committee approved last week, was held Monday night in the state House of Delegates chamber at the State Capitol.

Delegate Kevin Craig (D-Cabell, 16) said officials with the state Department of

Environmental Protection support the bill as an alternative to disposal at drilling sites.

“They feel like the safest place is a landfill with a separate holding cell for these cuttings,” said Craig.

The bill he's sponsoring would let the state Department of Environmental Protection authorize landfills to expand capacity by constructing and operating separate cells exclusively for the waste.

According to the DEP, existing regulations would require those landfills to be double-lined and equipped with leak detection systems, as well as groundwater monitoring wells.

“The cuttings won't be mixed in with other items that go into the landfill so it's really the most responsible way to handle this,” explained Craig.

As for the composition of the waste, “If you picture cutting a hole down, anywhere from 3,000 to 8,000 feet, into the ground, you're hauling out rock, all the material that makes up the strata down to the shale plays that they get into,” he said.

It was not immediately clear when the House Judiciary Committee would address the bill.

[Return to Top](#)

1 month after spill, W. Virginians wary of water | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Journal - Online, The

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — More than a month after chemicals seeped into West Virginia's biggest water supply, Jeanette Maddox would rather bundle up, drive to a shopping center parking lot and fill jugs of water from the spigot of a tanker truck than trust the tap in her kitchen.

This is Maddox's new routine three times a week, what she considers a necessary burden to feel safe drinking water, cooking with it and making coffee.

For weeks, government officials have said the running water in nine counties is suitable for all daily needs. But Maddox, like many of the 300,000 residents whose water was contaminated Jan. 9, is not convinced.

She notes that officials waited four to 10 days, depending on the neighborhood, before allowing people to use their water. In the days right after Freedom Industries leaked chemicals into the Elk River in Charleston, officials said the water should be used only for flushing toilets and fighting fires.

Residents have struggled to track, let alone trust, mixed messages and muddled information from government officials and Freedom Industries, the company involved. Despite public pressure, officials have been reluctant to call the water "safe" and have started arguing that the term is subjective. Instead, they use phrases such as "appropriate to use."

"Well, they won't use the word 'safe,'" said Maddox, who lives with her two daughters and two grandsons in Charleston. "But, the water is 'OK.' We don't know that."

Maddox is not alone, as visible signs of doubt about the water are everywhere.

In Charleston, eateries display signs that say, "We're cooking with bottled water." The chemical licorice smell still wafts out of some showers, toilets and taps in homes and businesses. The smell resurfaced in five schools Feb. 5 and 6, and the district temporarily shut them down. In one case, a teacher fainted and went to the hospital.

Hours after two of the schools closed Feb. 5, an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave a broad endorsement of the water, saying everyone, pregnant women included, could use it.

Up to that point, pregnant women had received conflicting guidance. Days after thousands of people were cleared to start drinking from faucets, federal officials advised that pregnant women should consider a different source of water.

The nine-county region was cleared to use the water before Freedom Industries revealed that a second chemical, stripped PPH, was in the tank that spilled.

Crude MCHM, the first chemical discovered in the spill, and stripped PPH, are used to clean coal. Little is known about their toxicity, in the short or long term. Neither is considered hazardous by federal standards. Only a handful of studies exist for crude MCHM, and they were on lab animals.

Today, doctors are still advising some patients, such as people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems, to avoid the water on a case-by-case basis, said Kanawha County Health Officer Dr. Rahul Gupta.

Outside water continues to be brought in by tanker trucks and military vehicles, under orders by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's administration. The public still demands it, Tomblin said.

"It is impossible to predict when this will change, if ever," Tomblin wrote in a Jan. 29 request for more federal help.

Last week, Tomblin changed his mind on in-home water testing, which he and other officials showed little interest in before. The inspections are part of a larger study Tomblin ordered that looks into key details that officials relied upon initially to lift the

water-use ban.

Tomblin contracted Dr. Andrew Whelton to lead the study. The researcher, based at the University of South Alabama, came to Charleston to study the spill without outside funding. Then he landed a \$50,000 federal grant studying what the chemicals do to pipes in houses. But he had been seeking online donations for return trips to West Virginia to monitor long-term water quality in homes.

Then Tomblin came calling and provided Whelton \$650,000 from the state. With that money, Whelton will sample water in some homes and continue investigating how the chemical permeates or bonds to pipes. Officials have maintained that the chemical doesn't have the right properties to stick around in piping and resurface later.

Whelton also is studying the odor threshold and threat of the chemical. Government experts have long said people can smell the licorice tinge well after the chemical is no longer dangerous in water or vapor. The smell enveloped the valley for days.

Whelton's team also is tasking experts to investigate the CDC's standard for how much of the chemical can be safely ingested in drinking water.

Tomblin's wide-ranging project would need millions more dollars in federal grants. He's calling for that money and, in an effort to re-instill public confidence, for the research team to be able to maintain independence from government officials.

"It is time to let the political officials step aside and let the scientists come in and do the work we need them to do," Tomblin said.

In a region nicknamed "Chemical Valley" because of the industry's huge footprint in greater Charleston, even residents who have lived here their entire lives are concerned.

At a legislative public meeting two weeks ago, several people said they're considering moving. Before the spill, people were already leaving West Virginia at one of the highest rates in the country.

Sue Davis has lived in Kanawha County for 71 years. She vowed that her faith in the water would never return. She said trusting the authorities won't make the potential risks any less threatening.

"I think (people) are deceiving themselves," Davis said.

Each rash, itch, dry patch of skin or dizzy spell lends doubt for people who shower or brush their teeth in the water. Gupta, the health official, said long-term monitoring is needed to track health conditions that could develop much later because little is known about the chemical's long-term effects.

"People are as angry and as frustrated as they were in the first few days," Gupta said.

"It's been a challenge. We are on frontiers unknown. And, the population — the 300,000 people or so — continue to suffer."

[Return to Top](#)

Local student launching partnership with NASA | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Journal - Online, The

Mary Stortstrom (mstortstrom@journal-news.net) , journal-news.net

MARTINSBURG - Jefferson County native Justin Ellis is getting the chance to reach for the stars - and study them, too.

Ellis was awarded the prestigious Einstein Fellowship in mid-January, which will give him the opportunity to work with NASA for three years on postdoctoral research.

There are only a handful of individuals who receive the award each year.

Ellis, a graduate of Jefferson High School who studied at Shepherd University and West Virginia University, did not initially plan on entering a career in the sciences. According to proud parents Karen and Roger Ellis, Justin enjoyed motocross, playing baseball and karate as a teenager, and played drums in a band.

Ellis

"When I first went to Shepherd University, I was a sociology major, and I took one of the general studies science classes. It was more astrophysics-based, since the professor who taught it is an astrophysicist," Ellis said. "He was just super charismatic and passionate. I had always kind of been interested in science, but after that class I thought, 'I could go into this.'"

Ellis said after his formative experience in the science class, he switched his major to math, since Shepherd University did not offer a physics program. Later, he went to WVU and obtained a Bachelor of Science in physics before attending the University of Wisconsin.

While attending Shepherd University, Ellis was one of a small group of students that helped establish the university's observatory.

"It was me and three other people, and we basically did a lot of outreach stuff. We had little talks about the observatory to people that might donate to the observatory. Then we did a lot of tests, looking at light pollution and figuring out where on campus was the darkest and the best place to put it," Ellis said.

Dr. Jason Best, professor of astronomy and astrophysics at Shepherd University, taught

the class that persuaded Ellis to change his major. He remembers Ellis's role in the founding of the observatory.

"Justin was one of the original group of students that helped get the observatory up and running," Best said. "I approached him and a few other dedicated students. He did research and co-authored research papers on topics dealing with the observatory."

Best said Ellis's passion is a trait that sets him apart from his peers.

"I knew from the moment I started working with Justin that he would be successful. It wasn't a matter of if he'd be successful, but a matter of when. He had a passion for discovery, and you could hear the joy in his voice when he talked about his work," Best said.

Earl Scime, the associate vice president of research for WVU, recalls working with Ellis in the university's research lab.

"I had him in one of my classes after he transferred. It was the third class that physics majors usually take, and Justin seemed quite bright, but he also seemed to be struggling in the class. I talked with him and found out he had taken the first class but had skipped taking the second class, going straight to the third. Once he was caught up, he did very well. He rose to the challenge," Scime said.

According to Scime, WVU hired a new science professor last fall. He said all of the candidates for the position cited one of Ellis's research papers in their presentations.

"It was great to see one of my students' work impacting the field so greatly while he was still a graduate student," Scime said.

While working with NASA for his Einstein Fellowship, Ellis will be studying gravitational waves, ripples in the curvature of spacetime that act like waves.

"I'll be searching for gravitational waves using pulsars," Ellis said. "Other people use telescopes to find the pulsars, and once they find them, pulsars emit these radio signals that are really regular signals like a lighthouse. If you can find it, then you can time it."

Ellis said the presence of gravitational waves can be detected through the radio signals. He said he will spend time writing computer programs and algorithms that can pick out the gravitational waves amongst the signals.

Last week, Ellis was at the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico attending meetings with other researchers. Ellis's work will also involve research conducted at the Green Bank National Radio Astronomy Observatory in West Virginia.

- Staff writer Mary Stortstrom can be reached at 304-725-6581 or www.twitter.com/mstortstromJN.

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

WOWK-TV - Online

02/17/2014

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) - North Carolina's top environmental official said Monday that he briefed Gov. Pat McCrory before intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,000 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps.

Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included no requirement to force the nation's largest electricity provider to actually clean up its pollution.

The state has now put its proposed settlement on hold following the massive Feb. 2 spill from one of Duke's coal ash dumps into the Dan River, which turned the water cloudy and gray for miles.

State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers at an oversight hearing that he spoke with the governor before his agency used its regulatory authority to intervene in lawsuits filed by a coalition of environmental groups under the federal Clean Water Act.

"When I went to brief Gov. McCrory about the initiation of those suits, he said two things," Skvarla recounted. "He said protect the environment, and do the right thing."

But Skvarla maintains he never told McCrory, a Republican who worked for Duke for 28 years, about the proposed terms of the settlement negotiated by his agency.

The citizens groups that originally tried to sue Duke opposed the state's deal, saying it shielded the company from far harsher penalties it might have faced in federal court had the state not intervened.

Federal prosecutors served Skvarla's agency and Duke with grand jury subpoenas demanding records as part of a federal investigation into the spill, which contaminated the river so badly public health officials advised against prolonged contact with the water or eating fish.

The state announced Monday that it will begin testing for contaminants in John H. Kerr Reservoir in Virginia, roughly 80 miles downstream from the spill site, after layers of

gray ash were seen on the surface.

McCrory has maintained close ties to Duke since leaving the company to launch his first campaign for governor in 2008.

Campaign finance reports show Duke Energy, its political action committee, executives and their immediate families have donated at least \$1.1 million to McCrory's campaign and affiliated groups that spent money on TV ads, mailings and events to support him.

After becoming governor on his second try in 2012, McCrory gained authority to make numerous decisions that could affect Duke's bottom line, including making appointments at the state commission that approves utility rates.

On a state ethics form last year, the governor indicated that his investment portfolio includes holdings of Duke stock valued in excess of \$10,000, though he is under no legal obligation to disclose the specific amount and has refused to do so as recently as last week.

McCrory said Friday that he sees no conflict of interest in his role as elected official and corporate shareholder.

Follow Associated Press reporter Michael Biesecker at [Twitter.com/mbieseck](https://twitter.com/mbieseck)

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[Return to Top](#)

Citizens gear up for drilling waste hearing | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Citizen groups are gearing up for a public hearing this evening on a bill aimed at exempting from West Virginia's landmark landfill tonnage limits waste from the boom in natural gas drilling in the state's Marcellus Shale region.

The House Judiciary Committee scheduled the public hearing on the bill (HB4411) for 5 p.m. at the House chamber.

Activists and citizens from the Marcellus region were at the Capitol already for the West Virginia Environmental Council's annual "E-Day" lobbying event. The bill, supported by the state Department of Environmental Protection, would help state regulators quell an ongoing controversy over the dumping of huge amounts of gas-drilling waste -- in some cases in violation of existing landfill waste caps. "The caps

were sacred, and DEP has done away with them with the stroke of a pen," said Norm Steenstra, who was environmental council's lead lobbyist two decades ago when the Legislature passed tough new garbage laws.

Steenstra referred to a January 2013 memo in which DEP allowed landfills accepting drilling waste to exceed their current monthly caps if they are seeking new state permits to increase those caps. The new legislation would essentially write DEP's action into state law.

DEP Secretary Randy Huffman previously described the issue as "kind of an emergency situation" in which some landfills were in danger of exceeding their legal tonnage caps.

Scott Mandirola, director of DEP's Division of Water and Waste Management, said that under the existing tonnage caps, "There aren't enough landfills to take the material" from the state's natural gas drilling boom.

As part of Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's "Horizontal Drilling Act," passed during a special session in December 2011, lawmakers tried to encourage disposal of solid wastes from drilling operations in permitted landfills.

[Return to Top](#)

Editorials from around Ohio | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Intelligencer - Online, The

Excerpts of recent editorials of statewide and national interest from Ohio newspapers:

The Columbus Dispatch, Feb. 17

Graduated driver's licenses, where teens earn more driving privileges as they age and gain experience behind the wheel, have been adopted by all 50 states in recent years.

Statistics back up those laws: Easing kids into driving and helping them to build skill and maturity makes for safer roads.

But Ohio lawmakers have made proposals that push the limits of what is reasonable.

These include new licensing requirements for people who, in the eyes of the law, are adults.

As it stands, to get a license at age 16 or 17, the applicant must have completed a formal driver's education course, with 24 hours of classroom instruction and eight hours of in-car training with a certified instructor.

An amendment to House Bill 204, introduced during a Tuesday committee hearing, would require that 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds also take that formal driver's education course.

By that age, some young people are out on their own. They might be supporting themselves; they might even be supporting families. Requiring them to fork over several hundred dollars for a driver's education course could be a hardship.

More defensible are stricter rules governing 16- and 17-year-old drivers....

HB 204 also would ban young drivers from being on the road between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. unless a parent or guardian is present.

Currently, 16-year-old drivers must be in by midnight; 17-year-olds by 1 a.m....

Obviously, if the state keeps all teen drivers off the road, none are going to crash. But the desire for safety has to be tempered by practicality.

Online: <http://bit.ly/1bYKuYX>

The Marietta Times, Feb. 14

A bill working its way through the Ohio Legislature would ban sales of electronic cigarettes to minors. An Ohio Senate committee approved the measure Tuesday.

E-cigarettes — not to be confused with smokeless cigarettes — use a battery to heat a liquid containing nicotine and flavoring. The resulting vapor is inhaled much like cigarette smoke.

Studies are examining whether e-cigs are safe, let alone safer than tobacco cigarettes. And the effect of secondhand "smoke" from the devices isn't yet known.

What isn't debatable is whether minors should be barred from access to the nicotine-delivery devices. The proposal should be approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor as quickly as possible.

Online: <http://bit.ly/1gwkTvp>

The (Canton) Repository, Feb. 17

Gov. John Kasich and his fellow Republicans in state government are pretty much in sync on taxes in general: the lower, the better. But they have different visions when it comes to a severance tax on oil and natural gas drilling, and that's to the benefit of eastern Ohio.

Kasich wants a higher tax on drilling activity than many Republicans in the Legislature do. Advocates of a lower tax stress their fear that the 4 percent tax Kasich originally proposed would scare the industry away. For his part, the governor is giving other interests their due, as well....

Speaking to reporters at a recent Associated Press meeting, Kasich said: "We don't want to do something that doesn't mean the taxpayers of this state get some fair value for their resources that are being depleted. On the other hand, we don't want to have a severance tax that drives people out, because this industry is critical to the state. So it's kind of like porridge. It can't be too cold and it can't be too hot. It's got to be just right."

As for what isn't "just right," Kasich has made it clear that he'll know it when he sees it....

Also, Kasich, never shy, can afford to be bolder in defense of his own tax plan, now that he has no challengers in the May GOP primary. All this bodes well for the eastern Ohio counties where the most drilling is occurring.

Steubenville Herald-Star, Feb. 16

If you haven't noticed, the world has changed in a dangerous way.

The price of heroin has followed all the rules of basic economics of supply and demand. The supply has increased to meet an unfortunate spike in demand, and the price has made this dangerous narcotic "affordable."

Affordable, that is, in price per hit, but not when one considers the price in human suffering, societal damage and lost potential.

Affordable until one considers how pervasive the drug has become, when a symbol of American childhood, a fast-food child's meal with a toy, can become a vehicle for the drug trade...

High-profile deaths such as talented actor Phillip Seymour Hoffman's call the drug into sharp focus.

Anyone is vulnerable. From Cleveland to New York to Pittsburgh to the streets of our local communities, the drug is available and doing its damage. It's not just the "gritty industrial heartland" that's vulnerable, either. Seemingly idyllic Vermont has been declared so badgered by heroin that the governor there dedicated much of his state of the state address this year to the heroin epidemic....

There is a cost in illnesses, overdoses, deaths, accidents and lost time for employers. There is a cost in thefts, broken families and relationships and violence. And there is a cost in treatment and redemption for those who try to fight the habit.

The reasons for heroin's rise are many, but it's as much a result of the ongoing prescription painkiller problem as it is from a people living without hope, or without caring for themselves or others enough to avoid the needle.

The solution remains, unfortunately, in trying to curtail the market and treat the addicted.

Online: <http://bit.ly/1j5aRBJ>

[Return to Top](#)

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

WTRF-TV - Online

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) - North Carolina's top environmental official said Monday that he briefed Gov. Pat McCrory before intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,111 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps.

Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included no requirement to force the nation's largest electricity provider to actually clean up its pollution.

The state has now put its proposed settlement on hold following the massive Feb. 2 spill triggered by a pipe collapse at one of Duke's coal ash dumps adjacent to the Dan River, which turned cloudy and gray for miles.

State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers at an oversight hearing that he spoke with the governor before his agency used its regulatory authority to intervene in lawsuits filed by a coalition of environmental groups under the federal Clean Water Act.

"When I went to brief Gov. McCrory about the initiation of those suits, he said two things," Skvarla recounted. "He said protect the environment, and do the right thing."

But Skvarla maintains he never told McCrory, a Republican who worked for Duke for 28 years, about the proposed terms of the settlement negotiated by his agency.

The citizens groups that originally tried to sue Duke opposed the state's deal, saying it shielded the company from far harsher penalties it might have faced in federal court had the state not intervened.

Skvarla bristled at coverage of the issue by The Associated Press and other news media

outlets for suggesting his agency's intervention "blocked" the environmental groups from holding Duke accountable. He said those advocates are still free to voice their concerns in court, if a judge allows.

Skvarla, who previously declined an interview request from The AP, complained that reporters contacting his agency for comment weren't interested in getting "the rest of the story."

"Nobody has called and asked sufficient questions," Skvarla lamented. "There were lots of calls, but all they were asking for was quotes."

Skvarla declined to say what he considers sufficient questions or why he feels his agency, which has issued numerous news releases in the two weeks since the spill, is unable to convey its perspective to the public.

Asked if he thought a \$99,111 fine with no requirement that Duke clean up its coal ash dumps was a settlement in the best interests of the people of North Carolina, Skvarla suggested the now-scuttled deal was better than getting caught in a protracted legal fight against the energy giant.

"We are not dictators, we are not pharaohs," said Skvarla, who questioned whether Duke would have ever agreed to tougher terms.

Federal prosecutors served Skvarla's agency and Duke Energy with grand jury subpoenas demanding records as part of a federal investigation into the spill, which contaminated the river so badly public health officials advised against prolonged contact with the water or eating fish.

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legal obligation to disclose the specific amount and refused to do so as recently as last week.

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George Everett, Duke's director of environmental and legislative affairs, told state lawmakers Monday that the company is sorry about the spill and will be accountable for the cleanup. But beyond scooping out a big pile of coal ash from the Dan at its plant, it is unclear how the tens of thousands of tons of toxic material can be removed now that it has settled to the bottom of the river for miles downstream.

Tom Reeder, the state's director of water quality, said testing shows the levels of arsenic, lead and other contaminants that spiked in the immediate wake of the spill are returning to levels considered safe for humans. However he conceded it may be too late for some aquatic species living in the river and worried about the long-term effects of the coal ash in the Dan.

"If you're a mollusk and covered with ash then, yeah, you're gonna die," Reeder said.

Follow Associated Press reporter Michael Biesecker at [Twitter.com/mbieseck](https://twitter.com/mbieseck)

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[Return to Top](#)

Residents still wary of water | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Herald-Dispatch - Online, The

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Comments

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[Return to Top](#)

Citizens speak against frack waste bill | [View Clip](#)

02/17/2014

Charleston Gazette - Online, The

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Of 20 speakers at a House hearing Monday, only one -- an industry representative -- spoke in favor of a bill that would exempt natural gas drilling waste in the Marcellus Shale region from the state's landfill tonnage limits.

Charlie Burd, executive director of the Independent Oil and Gas Association of West Virginia, said the bill -- supported by the state Department of Environmental Protection "recognizes the reasonable approach" of disposing such material. "West Virginia's commercial landfill regulations are among the strongest and most comprehensive in the country," Burd said. "Disposal of these materials in commercial landfills will assure that these materials are handled in a highly regulated and environmentally positive manner." But in some instances, this exemption would surpass existing monthly landfill waste limits set by solid waste authorities.

Six landfills in Brooke, Harrison, Ohio, Wetzel and Wood counties hold the gas-drilling material, which accounts for about one-third of the material accepted at each, according to DEP data from July 2012 to July 2013.

Thornton Cooper, a South Charleston attorney once employed by the state's Public Service Commission to defend its solid waste laws in federal court, called the proposed bill "a wrecking ball that would undo an amazing amount of work that the Legislature did in the 80's and 90's." Cooper said both private and public landfills are underused and that "There is plenty of space in our landfills right now to let in Marcellus Shale store the drilling contents," throughout the state, not only in places like Wetzel County that have exceeded their limits.

Solid waste authorities are worried the bill (HB4411) would limit their ability to monitor and control these waste restrictions.

Bill Hughes, of the Wetzel County Solid Waste Authority, told members of the House Judiciary Committee and DEP Secretary Randy Huffman Monday night that a "three-legged stool" was created more than 20 years ago requiring the DEP, the state's Public Service Commission and local solid waste authorities "to work together in deciding sizing and environmental restrictions" of landfills. "Unfortunately the recent memos from the DEP undid over 20 years of standing law and has now allowed our landfill in Wetzel County to exceed its legal limit by anywhere from 200 and 300 percent," Hughes said. "The legal limit is 10,000. It's been taking up to 40,000 tons a month." From a surface owner perspective, housing such waste in a landfill is better than the alternative, said Julie Archer of the West Virginia Surface Owners' Rights Organization.

[Return to Top](#)

NC Gov. McCrory briefed on Duke coal ash lawsuit | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
Intelligencer - Online, The

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina's top environmental official said Monday that he briefed Gov. Pat McCrory before intervening in lawsuits against Duke Energy, resulting in a negotiated settlement that fined the \$50 billion corporation \$99,111 to resolve violations over groundwater contamination leaching from two huge coal ash dumps.

Environmentalists criticized the modest fines as a sweetheart deal that included no requirement to force the nation's largest electricity provider to actually clean up its pollution.

The state has now put its proposed settlement on hold following the massive Feb. 2 spill triggered by a pipe collapse at one of Duke's coal ash dumps adjacent to the Dan River, which turned cloudy and gray for miles.

State Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary John Skvarla told lawmakers at an oversight hearing that he spoke with the governor before his agency used its regulatory authority to intervene in lawsuits filed by a coalition of environmental groups under the federal Clean Water Act.

"When I went to brief Gov. McCrory about the initiation of those suits, he said two things," Skvarla recounted. "He said protect the environment, and do the right thing."

But Skvarla maintains he never told McCrory, a Republican who worked for Duke for 28 years, about the proposed terms of the settlement negotiated by his agency.

The citizens groups that originally tried to sue Duke opposed the state's deal, saying it shielded the company from far harsher penalties it might have faced in federal court had the state not intervened.

Skvarla bristled at coverage of the issue by The Associated Press and other news media outlets for suggesting his agency's intervention "blocked" the environmental groups from holding Duke accountable. He said those advocates are still free to voice their concerns in court, if a judge allows.

Skvarla, who previously declined an interview request from The AP, complained that reporters contacting his agency for comment weren't interested in getting "the rest of the story."

"Nobody has called and asked sufficient questions," Skvarla lamented. "There were lots of calls, but all they were asking for was quotes."

Skvarla declined to say what he considers sufficient questions or why he feels his agency, which has issued numerous news releases in the two weeks since the spill, is unable to convey its perspective to the public.

Asked if he thought a \$99,111 fine with no requirement that Duke clean up its coal ash dumps was a settlement in the best interests of the people of North Carolina, Skvarla suggested the now-scuttled deal was better than getting caught in a protracted legal fight against the energy giant.

"We are not dictators, we are not pharaohs," said Skvarla, who questioned whether Duke would have ever agreed to tougher terms.

Federal prosecutors served Skvarla's agency and Duke Energy with grand jury subpoenas demanding records as part of a federal investigation into the spill, which contaminated the river so badly public health officials advised against prolonged contact with the water or eating fish.

The state announced Monday that it will begin testing for contaminants in John H. Kerr Reservoir in Virginia, roughly 80 miles downstream from the spill site, after a sheen of gray ash was seen on the surface.

McCrory has maintained close ties to Duke since leaving the company to launch his first campaign for governor in 2008.

Campaign finance reports show Duke Energy, its political action committee, executives and their immediate families have donated at least \$1.1 million to McCrory's campaign and affiliated groups that spent money on TV ads, mailings and events to support him.

After becoming governor on his second try in 2012, McCrory gained authority to make numerous decisions that could affect Duke's bottom line, including making appointments at the state commission that approves utility rates.

On a state ethics form last year, the governor indicated that his investment portfolio includes holdings of Duke stock valued in excess of \$10,000, though he is under no legal obligation to disclose the specific amount and refused to do so as recently as last week.

McCrory has said he sees no conflict of interest in his role as elected official and corporate shareholder.

George Everett, Duke's director of environmental and legislative affairs, told state lawmakers Monday that the company is sorry about the spill and will be accountable for the cleanup. But beyond scooping out a big pile of coal ash from the Dan at its plant, it is unclear how the tens of thousands of tons of toxic material can be removed now that it has settled to the bottom of the river for miles downstream.

Tom Reeder, the state's director of water quality, said testing shows the levels of arsenic, lead and other contaminants that spiked in the immediate wake of the spill are returning to levels considered safe for humans. However he conceded it may be too late for some aquatic species living in the river and worried about the long-term effects of the coal ash in the Dan.

"If you're a mollusk and covered with ash then, yeah, you're gonna die," Reeder said.

Follow Associated Press reporter Michael Biesecker at [Twitter.com/mbieseck](https://twitter.com/mbieseck)

[Return to Top](#)

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02/17/2014

Journal - Online, The

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[Return to Top](#)

John Ellison Visits WVU-P | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014
WTAP-TV - Online

Born on the banks of the Kanawha River, John Ellison left his hometown of Montgomery, West Virginia at the age of 17 with all of his clothes packed in a small grocery bag.

Ellison first used his coal mining father's guitar in a school talent show.

From there his love of music grew, as he set off to make it big in New York City.

That's where he met and formed the band, The Soul Brothers Six.

Ellison wrote the 1967 smash hit, "Some Kind of Wonderful."

Tonight at West Virginia University at Parkersburg, Ellison shared his life journey.

Ellison endured many hardships during the civil rights when african american musicians were struggling for acceptance on white mainstream radio.

Ellison's message to everyone is that the only person stopping you from becoming the person you want to be is the person staring back at you.

Comments are posted from viewers like you and do not always reflect the views of this station.

Weather

39° F

Weather for

Parkersburg, WV

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[Return to Top](#)

Report from Athens shows impact of shale | [View Clip](#)
02/17/2014

Parkersburg News and Sentinel - Online

ATHENS - The Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs on Monday will release its Ohio Shale Development Community Impact Survey.

Last summer, the Voinovich School distributed more than 500 surveys to elected officials in 17 counties experiencing the majority of shale activity and development in Ohio. The survey assesses the impact of shale development within 17 counties in eastern Ohio with a focus on population, housing, public safety, infrastructure, environment, local employment, area business activity and economic development.

Findings will include:

- * Which shale development activities are being reported across the counties surveyed.
- * The influence shale development has had on population and how that has impacted local housing and public safety.
- * How shale development activities have impacted local infrastructure and environment.

Fact Box

If You Go

- * A public web presentation will be discussed in depth from 11 a.m. to noon Monday.
- * Pre-registration by the public and the media is required for the events. Additional information and webinar registration can be found at <http://www.ohio.edu/ce3/research/shale/shaleimpactsurvey.cfm>.
- * Some of the ways shale development has altered employment of area residents.
- * The influence of shale development on the local economy.

As a major research institution located within the state's Utica and Marcellus shale plays, Ohio University has a responsibility to address the complex economic, social, environmental and technical questions associated with shale development in Ohio, Scott Miller, director of the school's Consortium for Energy, Economics and the Environment, said.

"Shale development is having a major impact on the communities of eastern Ohio," Miller said. The Voinovich School is seeking to build collaborative relationships to assist in this undertaking. Interested foundations, organizations, and agencies should contact Robin Stewart, senior project manager, at ce3@ohio.edu for more information.

[Return to Top](#)